

2007-Eckhart-Tolle-Joy-of-Being-Retreat-Awakening-to-Your-True-Identity in-Denmark Part 1 of 2

[Speaker 1] (2:19 - 7:26:40)

Welcome. Nobody's in a hurry, I assume. We can take our time, or no time.

Everybody has arrived here from somewhere, today or yesterday. No matter how the journey went, you're here now. That's a fact.

I just wanted to remind you of that. Otherwise, you might be sitting here and carrying some sticky substance that's still pulling you, it's called the past, or today, yet the past is still here, sticking to you. That can happen if you forget that you're here now.

And that seems such a simple statement as to be almost meaningless. The mind says, of course I'm here now, but of course the mind isn't here. If you can truly feel what that means, I'm here now, you've already gone quite deep.

And perhaps that's the theme of our retreat, to remember that I'm here now. When I say remember, I don't mean that that becomes a memory, but to feel, to sense the presence that you are beyond the personal history that usually you identify with and take to be yourself. When you are your personal history, when that's the basis for your sense of self, identity, you're not here now.

Then the entire entity, to use a word that some spirit guides use to describe humans, then the entire entity is really a form of conditioning from the past. As one Buddhist monk that I spoke to many years ago put it, to me, said, there are no people, there are only karmic formations. That's how he looked at everybody.

There goes the karmic formation. So let that be the thread or the theme running through our retreat. I'll remind you quite often, I'm here now.

How do you know that you're here? Not through thinking. The moment you think, you're not here.

Only through sensing the presence, that which underlies is deeper than the person. That emerges, and the person becomes less dense. That's why we're here.

That emerges, who you are in the timeless dimension, comes through into this world of time. For this to happen, the person needs to lose its density. Density means continuous stream of thinking that you're identified with.

Every thought becomes an I, I. I'm upset. I'm sad.

I can't stand it anymore. That is density. If you believe in every statement that comes up in your head.

I shouldn't have come here. The weather is dreadful, and the emotion that corresponds to that thought. Why can't we have a retreat in Hawaii?

So we are here in northern Europe, and the weather is, as it is, perfect for our purposes. It's easier to go within when it's rainy and windy. So it's perfect.

But if the mind says it's dreadful and you believe it, of course it's no longer perfect. So part of the practice, our retreat, is to be there as the awareness when your mind starts saying things as it will, maybe already has done since you arrived here. It's normal.

The teaching, for lack of a better word, on this retreat, takes place on different levels. There are words. There's the energy field.

And equally, if not more important, are the conditions that you encounter while you're here. By conditions I mean whatever appears there in front of you as an event, a person, a situation. It's the condition of this moment.

And there lies a great teaching. And the person doesn't know that, because the person himself is a condition no more. And it reacts to other conditions.

And through reacting to other conditions, strengthens its own condition of personal selfhood. Unconscious, of course, not a personal problem of yours. Particularly important is when conditions arise and the mind has other ideas.

Starting, for example, with the weather. It's a relatively harmless thing, of course, but the mechanism is the same even when there's a huge amount of suffering. So we start with little things, complaining about the weather.

There's the condition, and there's the mind that has some other idea about how the weather should be. And then forcefully expresses that idea, thus putting himself in a position of being right. It's dreadful.

So you've pronounced judgment, and so your sense of, pseudo sense of self, has temporarily become inflated. And then after a while it deflates again. And then the mind made self will look out for some other condition that does not agree with the mental expectation.

And of course, it never has to wait for very long. Now, it would be possible, perhaps, to find a retreat place where everything is as near as possible, near perfect as possible. Perhaps in Hawaii or Bali.

Southern California, not at a retreat center, but at a spa and resort. I don't know about Europe, but in North America, many hotels, even little crummy hotels, are becoming spa and resort. They put in a hot tub, and a massage room, and some exercise equipment, buy some oils that you can buy, put on display.

Now the hotel has become a spa and resort. However, there are spas and resorts that are actually very grand and luxurious. And one would have thought, okay, if we had a retreat in a place like that, having near perfect condition for meditation, for being still, for going within, for enjoying the beauty of nature, if you satisfy your tastes with delicate, healthy, wonderful-tasting food, and the best juices and freshlings and smoothies.

And every participant gets three body treatments a day, with honey all over your skin, and rose petals on top. And the next treatment is a facial with caviar. And in between, you listen to wonderful spiritual teaching.

And after that, you go to the beach, palm trees, and then later you go to bed. Linen or silk sheets, a warm breeze coming through the window. So what are we doing in Northern Europe, in Denmark?

What the mind tells you are ideal conditions are necessary, are not necessarily ideal for awakening. It's precisely when things happen that go against the preconceptions, the ideas, the expectations that the mind has. It's precisely when the personal me starts playing up, because it finds a condition it disagrees with.

That's the learning, the moment when you can become aware of all that. This does not mean that we need to choose the worst possible conditions for retreat. It did occur to me, I must admit, a few times, to choose a retreat place where everything is planned to go wrong, as the teaching.

So whatever you expect to find, you'll be disappointed, and it's just everything is going wrong against expectations. That would be a tremendous teaching, but we don't need to go to such an extreme. But to stay with that idea for a moment, there would be a great opportunity, of course, for learning.

Now imagine that you went on such a retreat where everything is planned to go wrong. Now imagine if I had told you before the retreat that everything, all the conditions you encounter are going to go wrong, and that's your teaching. Well, how would you experience that retreat then?

Very interesting. You would experience everything with a certain amount of detachment, because you know, oh, this condition is there to teach me, he told us. So already you would go, your inner state would be quite different.

Instead of demanding that conditions should satisfy you, your expectations, your mind, your personal self, you would be in a state of surrender to conditions, because you would already know that the conditions are there to wake you up. Well, then it might not be the real thing anymore. And on some retreats, occasionally you get one or two difficult people.

Well, one can almost say out of a hundred, at least two will be very difficult. Oh, is that me? One could even pay some actors on a retreat to play the part of difficult participants.

But if you knew that, of course, you would be very detached if they start shouting and fuming and saying, this is terrible, I'm going home. Okay, he's the actor. And of course, every difficult and other person too, is an actor in a way, acting out the script, the conditioned mind.

Some have a more dramatic script than others, that's all. And so we work on the retreat, not against the conditions that arise, but with the conditions that arise. What is my relationship to the condition that arises at this moment?

Is it possible to be in alignment with conditions? Which does not mean, of course, as you know, that you necessarily cannot take action to bring about some change, if that's what you choose to do. We're talking about an inner reaction to conditions, not whatever action you take externally.

You could say, my mattress is too hard or too soft, and can I have another one? Maybe they have another one. But if they don't, what do you do then?

Then that's the condition, the mattress then is the condition. And then the mind says, I can't possibly stay on this retreat with a mattress like that. And is that completely true?

Or is that something that is part of the script? Are you there as the awareness that observes the conditioned response or reaction? Or are you the reaction?

That's part of the teaching here. So the conditions of this retreat are another aspect or element of the teaching or learning. Very important part.

What the mind thinks are ideal conditions for my spiritual growth, are not necessarily the ideal conditions for your spiritual growth. This time we came here to Europe on a boat, from America to Europe. And that's a little bit like a resort and spa.

Good food, entertainment, all kinds of treatments. But I observed closely at the end of the six days, conditions were as near as perfect as you can get. The sea was not too rough.

But I observed closely the people, and I don't think anybody got enlightened through that crossing, but everybody gained a few pounds. Now, if that boat had hit an iceberg, there would have been an opportunity for some people to become enlightened, to disidentify from the form, to wake up, either just before they die or they survive and wake up. If not wake up totally and forever, at least this could bring about a deepening, so that you're no longer identified with the surface level of yourself.

But fortunately, the boat did not hit an iceberg. So you may want to remember occasionally on this retreat, what I said, and just as a little device to get you into the state of alignment with the present moment and whatever condition arises in the present moment. If you just use it as a temporary device, if you find it hard to come into alignment with the present moment.

Okay. What if this is all he planned it all for us like that? What if this very thing that's happening now is part of the plan of this retreat?

That makes it, this little device makes it a little easier to step into. Oh, and now I'm telling you, not that I planned it, of course, but the totality, of course planned it. The universe has brought about the appearance of this moment.

Of course, so it was planned for you to encounter now. So please remember, I didn't plan it personally. Why did you do that?

But that is, it is any condition that arises is you can take action to improve it. That's fine. That's the external level.

What matters is the internal. What energy do you bring to the action that you take? If there is a possibility of taking action, what is the energy that flows into the action you take through words or through taking this or walking from here to there, talking to somebody, what energy flows into that?

Do you get smaller in the contracted in the action in your sense of self, or is the action freeing? And it could be that the same words are coming out of your mouth, but a totally different energy behind them. So you can experiment with that.

See if action can be not just as effective, but much infinitely more effective. If it comes out of a prior alignment with the suchness of this moment, that's the teacher. So always that's the teaching comes always through the now.

So prior means, first of all, I'm going to be in a state of uncompromising yes to what is, which means you face it completely. That is the situation, the condition, and facing it completely is not forming a judgment about it. There is a moment when the mind is not operating.

And there's simply a field of aware presence that looks visually or otherwise at the situation. That means already the conditioned script in your mind, the person has already dissolved temporarily. A different level of consciousness is there now.

That's intelligence, true intelligence. And then action may arise, or it may not, it may just be that, see, that's how it is. There's not much that can be done right now.

And then you suddenly experience the miracle of being free internally of reactivity

against towards external conditions. Other words, outer conditions no longer have the power to determine your inner state of consciousness. That's could be called freedom from the world.

It implies also that your mind, which is part of the world, which is part of the conditions that you encounter, because every thought is an internal condition, similar to an external condition, that also implies that the thoughts that go through your mind no longer have the power to upset you because you recognize them as conditioned thoughts. After a while, quite a few thoughts may not even come anymore. In the meantime, you recognize thoughts, and especially forceful thoughts that we call reactions or reactive patterns, you recognize them as part of the conditioned, the script.

You're the actor, and you see yourself acting out, either in your head, or if you catch it a little later, while you are talking to somebody, you, you, whatever. So the practice is being there when it happens, and conditions are useful, very useful on that. And so here we set aside a period of a few days when we practice on a relatively small scale, because although we have experienced on retreats in other places, earthquakes and hurricane-force winds, in Denmark that is less likely, because everything here is in moderation.

It's a very peaceful place. It's not likely that there will be an earthquake or hurricane, and yet, there will be conditions arising while you're here. And if an earthquake does hit, then that becomes our practice.

Even if it has to be at the last moment of your life, you suddenly wake up. Yeah, that's it, free. In the meantime, we work with unsatisfying bathrooms, mattresses, small things.

The mechanics are the same, no matter whether it's small things or big things. So here we practice with the small things. So we've set aside a few days for practicing, seeing how we can work with the conditions that arise.

Instead of desperately trying to make the conditions fit 100% our expectations. Yeah, we can fix that. Oh no, that's not right either.

That's hard work. And once you put one picture up there, another one falls off the wall there. Now, there are certain teachings, spiritual teachings, that say that the human being can become the master of all conditions, can master external conditions, so that no undesirable conditions arise again.

I don't want to go into that too much, but I would suggest that you will by experimenting with what we're doing here, by transcending conditions, that is what it is all about. We are learning to transcend the conditions that arise. And we're practicing in these days here and later in life, you have to do the same, of course.

Life comes at you as this condition or that condition never stops. It comes at you and

doesn't never leave you alone. You think you've dealt with one thing and then the next, the phone rings, oh no.

So you deal with the conditions as they arise. And the practice is to face them completely and see that it is. Is is the key word, if you want to use it, or as the Buddha, I believe, says the suchness of what is, of this moment, it is.

And then there's a certain, two aspects to this acceptance of present moment conditions. One is, it looks almost passive, because you say, I welcome this moment as it is, because it is. The other aspect of that state of consciousness is sharp.

And it says, it is as it is. It's like a sword that cuts through time and says, I refuse to become an enemy of life, because life is now. I refuse to become an enemy of the present moment, which means I'm not going to be an anti-life being, because it's mad.

So there's a sharpness. Every condition, you look at it in absolute, alert presence. You also welcome it.

So it's a gentle and it cuts through all the stuff that comes from here. So the practice is transcending the conditions, rather than believing, as the world does, that the conditions in your life are here to satisfy you. And continuously demanding that they should satisfy you.

And therefore always needing some condition that's not here yet, because the present one doesn't satisfy you. So there's a need for the next thing to come because the present one is not satisfying. And then the mind complains about it or gets depressed.

Transcendence of conditions. And then you may encounter, if that becomes your life, you transcend the conditions. Internally, you are free of the reactivity of the person.

There is an openness. And as transcendence becomes more prevalent in your life, many people report that they experience an improvement in the general conditions. In that sense, one could say you become a master of conditions, but not in the sense in which the ego imagines it.

You become aligned with the very evolutionary impulse of the universe. And that that movement, if it wants to manifest something through you, it'll do that when you're open to life. It's not that you are separate from it.

When we use language, it sounds as if there was the consciousness. And there's you know, you are that you become, you realize that you are that what exactly does it want? I don't even ask.

I'm open to what it wants at this moment. Which is this? What plans does it have?

I don't even ask. I'm not that interested in what plans the universe has. I respond to the

need of this moment.

And that's fulfilling. And then it unfolds. I never feel that I'm the master of all conditions.

And occasionally things still happen. I miss what happens. I miss the bus.

Anything can happen. It's secondary. What happens becomes of secondary importance.

And once you reach a certain state of consciousness, even if you could create anything you wanted, you wouldn't have to want to create that much. You don't need that much. So we are here to learn transcendence of conditions, rather than demanding fulfillment through conditions.

That's where you can become powerful. Anybody who fights conditions or whatever, whoever is engaged in any kind of fight is not powerful. Not that is not power.

So we have so far the three levels of teaching on our retreat. One is words, verbalized. It's not a teaching, they're little pointers.

And really everything that you hear in words, you know already. And if you don't know it, then there's a density in the mind. The mind continuously says, that doesn't make sense.

That can't be right. What's he talking about? He's repeating himself again.

He says, there's only the now. He already said that five minutes ago. So if there's a certain density, then it's hard to be here because there's no attempt here to convince you of anything.

Everything is so simple. There's nothing to believe in as such. So there's no attempt to make you believe in anything.

It's nothing to do with this. Everything is so simple and self evident. Just try it out.

I say try out working with conditions. The words point to that. And there is the energy field here as we sit together.

Now that is something that some people are familiar with. And other people who haven't read many spiritual books or gone to spiritual things say, oh, this is spooky energy. But of course, that's an important part of the teaching here.

If you sit here and feel, it feels good to be here. There's a certain brightness and presence. If there's little mind activity in you, as there is in me, there's virtually no mind activity apart from the words, no mind activity.

And you can feel the energy of presence. And everyone contributes to that. And occasionally, in one or two people here and there, it could be one person, one minute, another person, the next minute, the mind may come in, trying to interfere.

It gets uneasy and fearful. For example, you start thinking about your problematic life while you sit here. All the problems you left behind, which are waiting for you when you get home.

I shouldn't have come. I'm trying to deal with so many things. And then perhaps you hear a word and you suddenly wake up again, you hear the word now.

And suddenly realize there is no problem right now. No matter how many problems you left behind, and you call it my life, consisting mainly of problems, no matter how many problems you left behind, I don't think you could argue with the fact that at this moment, you don't have a problem. And not if you'd say you have an ache here or there, that's an ache, not a problem.

Even if you say you're in a serious situation, and you don't know how much longer you're going to live, nobody knows, of course, for themselves. Is that a problem? Now?

No. Only when the mind comes in, becomes a problem, you start thinking, me and my life, me and my life, I might lose my life. I lose my life.

Impossible. Because you are alive. You can't separate yourself from life.

So you can't lose something that you never had. There is no problem at this moment. Is that true?

Yes, you have to be, I can't see any. And if suddenly a bear comes bursting in here or whatever, well, there are probably no bears here, but a wild dog running towards me, then people would say, well, then you would have a problem, wouldn't you? No, because there's no time to make it into a problem.

Either I'll grab the dog by the neck, or I'll run off the stage, who knows? But there's no time for it to become a problem. It's a challenge.

If there's an earthquake suddenly, it's not a problem. Nobody would say, now we have a problem, because there's no time. To have a problem, you need time to ponder, to dwell on it.

Oh, an earthquake, that's a... It's just a situation, but not in the sense that it's used in American disaster movies, where they use the word situation meaning a problem. They say, we have a situation here.

That's not it. A situation is not a problem. Okay, so I'm talking to the person who left behind many personal problems.

And that person realizes at this moment, that at this moment, he or she does not have a problem. Unless you start thinking about your past, or your possible future. But in this moment of presence, there's no problem.

Okay. And then the mind says, yes, but the moment I get home, I will have the same problems again. It's true that there's no problem now.

But the moment I get home, it will be there. And that you can only verify and test in your own experience, by waiting until you get home. And that moment you open your door, you walk into your house or apartment, and start and then see where the problem is.

Oh, my husband or wife waiting for me. Maybe that was the problem. Whatever it is, some situation will be there, which traditionally you've called my problem or problems.

But there you have to separate again, this moment. Always to test whether you have a problem, you need to get rid of, push out time, past and future. Look at now, the only thing there is, by the way.

Look at now, this moment. What problem do I have right now? And even in the midst of so-called problems, you never have a problem now.

Just this moment. Even if you're at the lawyer, some difficult court case is coming up, they want this from you, and they want that, and they want to take away my house. And you sit in the armchair talking to three lawyers, and the phone is ringing.

Okay, what about this moment? Now this moment, you're sitting and breathing, and looking out of the window and feeling the aliveness in your body. And the phone rings and some voice is talking.

There's no problem at this moment. There's a problem because you project mentally, if all if it all goes wrong, what's going to happen to me? But this is this moment, isn't it?

And that's an amazing thing to realize. And you can start with a simple setting, like our retreat here, to realize that there is no problem. And we started with a simple sentence, I am here now.

And you remember, I am here now. That's a very powerful pointer. It puts you in touch with a dimension where there is no problem, where no problem can survive.

And only then does it become true. The saying, are you part of the problem? Or are you part of the solution?

And if you don't live in such a way that you realize that there are no problems, if you don't live in such a way, you will always be part of the problem. Only the one who realizes that at this moment, there is no problem, only a situation which may require action or not. Only the person who realizes that is not part of the world problem, as some people might call it.

So the solution is not on the level of mind, because it is the mind, the identification with mind that has created a world of problems. Mind itself is fine, but when mind has

assumed a position of master rather than tool or servant, then it becomes a big problem. And then you don't create new problems.

And that's an amazing contribution you can make to this world, amazing, because the millions of people who are complaining about the world's situations if they have not gone, if they are not in the process of going through this shift of consciousness, if that, they are part of the problem, even if their intentions are good, because the shift has not happened yet in them. Temporarily they can do a few good things, and then they get drawn, the good things that they do, then something happens, becomes another area of problems. It's wonderful to do good things, but the primary thing is the state of consciousness out of which they come.

So what a wonderful contribution to this world if you are no longer a maker of problems. First, of course, you become free. And then what a relief for people around you.

God, how many people live in this world whose identity is virtually being a problem? And it spreads. Some teachers these days are doing wonderful work at school.

They're already bringing in the new consciousness, some despite the system. Others are still possessed by their mind and by problems, and that's what they teach. They teach that the children to be a problem, because they themselves, that's how they live.

If possible, tonight, go into sleep consciously, rather than, if you're not already practicing it, rather than in the usual way. Bring as little past into our retreat as possible. And when thoughts about my life, which is the past and the future, comes up, recognize it as just thought that says, give me attention, I am important.

It has a pulling power. You need to think about this now, 2 o'clock in the morning, in bed. It's very important.

I have to go back to sleep. When you lie in bed tonight, use the inner body as an anchor for being present. Feel the aliveness within.

And then not that much thought, not very much thinking comes when you're anchored within. Present with every cell of the body. And if a condition arises during the night, which is possible, somebody's making a noise, somebody's snoring, then that's the condition of that moment.

And you look at it or you listen. You may want to take action or not. That's secondary.

But observe thoughts that arise. Any kind of thoughts. I can't be present in these conditions.

A thought. No more. I should have stayed home.

Would it be more peaceful than here? At least I have some privacy. Another thought.

I have my own bathroom at home. So you become the spacious presence for your thoughts. That's fine.

You don't fight the thoughts. But know that they're there. If you don't know that's a thought, the thought becomes your reality.

And then you react accordingly with emotion that says, that's the reality. And you may even then meet the world or other people believing that the thought is the reality. And often it becomes the reality when you meet other people.

But you already have a judgment about somebody. You believe in the thought. You react to this person as if the thought were true.

Then if that person is not fully conscious, he will oblige and the reaction you will get from that person will confirm that your judgment was true. The mechanism of unconsciousness, unconscious relationships. If you want one simple example, you're accusing somebody of being unconscious.

That person feels deeply hurt, is upset, and starts behaving unconsciously towards you. Confirming that your initial judgment was correct. We're becoming free of the madness.

So tonight in bed there's you and there's the thinker in you. And see what kind of relationship you have with the thinker. Maybe he'll be very quiet.

Maybe he'll say, I'll wait for a better opportunity. He or she is too conscious now, can't do anything. I'll wait until that other guy starts snoring.

Then I can come in. So go into sleep using the body as an anchor if you want. Or you use sense perceptions as an anchor for presence.

Be very alert, listen to the noises, the wind, the rain, whatever it is. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, again immediately go into present alert. Feel the inner body, sense perceptions, and a field of spacious alertness.

And you wake up in the morning, same thing. Of course fortunately there's no TV here, I hope, or radio to get your mind going. Lie in bed for a little while, if only a minute or two or longer.

Again, entering the day, being present. Many people are present for a few seconds after they wake up. They wake up, 10 seconds, 20 seconds, and then the machine starts working.

And two minutes later they look like this. I have to get on with things, I have to get on with things now. Gone, gone.

Thank you. Good morning. I'm here now still applies, I assume.

Do you have to check for yourself? No, what does that mean? How can you check for yourself?

It's not the thought that says, of course I'm here now. You can see how superficial every thought is. I'm here now has a deeper meaning.

We know what that is. We cannot know it through explanation or thinking about it. You can only know what I'm here now means by being here now, which is to be the presence that you are, the conscious presence that's the essence, without which this room wouldn't be here.

That was once called, somebody called it once, the light of the world. You are the light of the world. I am here now.

It's the realization of that. And that I am has no past and no future because it's out of time. And a shift happens rather than being a person, which you continue to be for a while anyway, there's nothing, don't need to be concerned about losing that.

But it's about transcending that rather than being primarily a person, you are primarily a presence, a person, of course, has a particular form. It is life having assumed a form. The presence that you are has no form.

Therefore, it cannot be defined in any way. And this is why up to now, so few people ever got it, realized it. You cannot apply your usual consciousness, which is the object consciousness that grasps and grasp presence in that way.

In other words, presence cannot be an object of consciousness because it has no form. Now, spiritual seekers, for some reason, didn't realize that. And still, even nowadays, often don't because the habit, the mental habit of looking to a form is very powerful.

That's how the mind works. So it attempts to make the, that which cannot be really even be spoken of, it makes it into a form, an object of consciousness, God, for example. The moment you say God, you've made that which cannot be spoken of, that which transcends all knowledge, but is the very basis for all life, is life itself before it is born into this or that.

That makes that life into an object, but it is the unmanifested, of course. So all human beings have done that to themselves. They have made themselves into an object of consciousness.

And then you have a relationship with that. Myself. Sometimes a nice relationship, sometimes an unpleasant relationship.

Sometimes you like yourself, and sometimes you can't stand yourself, or you dislike yourself, or you think you're inferior. And the next day, you think you're superior,

underneath fearing that you might be inferior after all. And that's a weird thing to do.

You make yourself into an object, and this is the particularity of the human stage of the evolution of consciousness on this planet, probably on others too. The natural world hasn't done that yet. Your dog does not have a relationship with him or herself, or the cat, or the deer, or the tree.

That's why their life is relatively unproblematic. They are rooted, much more rooted in life still than humans, rooted in being. But we are realizing something very important here, and to realize that, it seems that we had to go through that stage of making ourselves into an object.

Which perhaps is described, well it's described in various myths from around the world. Narcissus was a man in ancient Greek mythology, who looked into a pool of water, and of course at that time they didn't have mirrors, he looked into a very still pool of water and saw his own reflection there, and fell in love with himself. I can't remember what happened to him after that, but it wasn't good.

The myth says he fell in love with himself, but I would say really what happened, he became obsessed with the image self. And then it became everybody's destiny, for a few thousand years, and that's what very nicely expressed by the New York philosopher Woody Allen, who said when asked about his religion, he said, I was born into the Hebrew religion, but when I grew up, I converted to narcissism. And of course, this is very true, it's everybody's religion.

And we are here to go beyond that illusion, that you are an object in consciousness. And the mind will continuously attempt to make yourself again into an object, or it will try to find the ultimate and immediately make it into an object, to grasp it. So what that really means is you cannot know yourself, because the moment you say I know myself, you've made yourself into an object of consciousness.

At the most, what you can know is all the content, all the forms that make up the personality or the person. All the hidden desires and motivations and pains and things that were not looked at in childhood. It's interesting, fascinating.

You can go on for many years looking at yourself in such a way and discovering new layers of complexity. I am so interesting. And the more you look, the more you find.

I'm not saying that kind of knowledge is totally meaningless. It has its place too. And primarily, the place that it has is for it to realize that that's there, but you are not it.

And to realize what it is in you that stands in the way of realizing who you are beyond form. To look at all the forms that are blocking your realization of the formless, the mechanical patterns of your mind. And some people have devised systems which have a usefulness, temporary usefulness, enabling you to look at really what stands in the way.

How is it, in what way do I continuously block myself? And of course, these things are not personal. They are conditioned collective mind patterns, and I often talk about them.

Many of you know the principle patterns of always looking to the next thing, of identifying with every thought that arises. We express them here in more, in terms that are not personal, because there you can see that your personal characteristics are really an expression of the collective conditioning. So, you cannot know yourself.

That's an amazing realization. All you can know is what you are not. You can know a lot about yourself, but you can't know yourself.

About yourself means your story and your form. You can examine not only the psychological self, you could also examine the body. If you consider that yourself, which is the physical form, another aspect of the form self.

And if you started examining the body, you can go on for hundreds of years, because we've only scratched the surface of the complexity of the human body. Even the great experts know only a little. Nobody really understands how the cells work and the brain, anything works.

And you can always look deeper. It's very complex. So we are not here to understand the form completely.

It's enough if we know that which blocks us from getting the deeper realization of the essence. You cannot know yourself. You can only know about yourself.

So then what is the so-called self-realization? It does not mean, although it could, that you know all your past lifetimes. That would just mean that you know more stories than just one story.

I know you only know one story, but I know many. I apologize if one or two of you are particularly attached to your past lifetimes. So a complete reversal happens, because the self-realization, it would be more accurate to define as not knowing yourself.

Because no form arises in your consciousness when you realize who you are. The very fact why you realize who you are is that you're not making yourself into some form. So the formless, that which underlies all form, the unconditioned consciousness itself, knows itself.

When we speak about that in language, we use words, it sounds again as if when consciousness knows itself as consciousness, when we talk about it, it sounds as if consciousness had again made itself into an object, but that's not the case. It's only the case because we're using language, and the structure of language is such that a sentence has a subject and an object. When you get to a point where you get this feeling, I don't know who I am anymore, then you're getting close to self-realization.

But when at that moment your mind comes in and thinks that you should know who you are, then you're suddenly in a state of confusion and bewilderment. I don't know who I am, but I should know. But if you can become comfortable with a simple not needing to define yourself anymore, to yourself, and of course to others, that's implied, but primarily to yourself, you do not define yourself anymore through thought, formulating all kinds of judgments about yourself and opinions, then the self emerges.

It is formless. And it's there, not in any thought, but in the consciousness out of which every thought of course comes. And that is the presence.

Presence is formless. That's the I am. Not I am this or that.

That's again the person, but I am. And I am, of course, is only the words I am are the pointer. Sensing, feeling, not the right word, but we don't have right words for this.

The presence. That is prior to all sense perceptions, but make all sense perceptions possible. That is prior to all thoughts, but makes all thoughts possible.

Prior to all emotions, makes all emotions possible. Prior to all forms, but makes all forms possible. The presence, the original state before the universe was born.

The original state, timeless. And the amazing thing is, the state before the so-called Big Bang, what scientists say is the beginning of form, never disappeared. The original state actually survives in every being as the essence of every being.

So in every being, the essence of being is still untouched. In every being, the essence of being itself is present as presence. So the art of living in this world is to live here as the form that you seem to be temporarily.

At the same time, not lose remaining conscious of yourself as consciousness. And which sometimes one could call, I sometimes call the stillness in the background. An alive, alert stillness.

Or spaciousness in the background. In the foreground, your life unfolds. Conditions, remember, talked about last night.

Conditions. Thoughts, which are also conditions. Emotions.

Form. Most beings are lost in form, especially humans. Pre-humans still have some connection, but they're not conscious of it.

It's just that there is more peace and greater ease to life than for humans. We've gone through the stage of delusion. Now, the new stage is the recognition.

The awakening. And when it looks as if humans were awakening, it really is consciousness is awakening through this form. None of these words is the ultimate truth.

Such a thing cannot be expressed through words. So every word is just an approximation or distant approximation or pointer for you to remain in the realization. There's a world of form.

And there's the I am presence. When you accept the conditions that arise, as we talked about last night, the conditions that arise anywhere, here, anywhere in your life, any moment, the moment, then the formless can shine through more easily. When you're aligned with the form that life takes, then the life that is prior to form, the one life, can be sensed more easily in the background of all phenomena.

When you resist the form that life takes, the various forms, you yourself become more trapped in a form identity, and who you are in your timeless essence is obscured. And that's called suffering. The Buddha called it suffering.

And that's what it is, because you create suffering. The world becomes a heavy, painful, problematic place where you inflict suffering and problems on yourself and others. You become part of the madness.

Because not to be in touch with who you are in essence is very dysfunctional, and it is a form of insanity. And a species that for a long period of time remains, any form that remains out of touch, the species is at a precarious stage where its very survival is at stake. Because if consciousness cannot evolve through this form, it'll be very happy to do without that form.

You know how abundant nature is when a tree, seeds come, thousands of seeds, the tree drops in the fall. And consciousness is awakening. If it's awakening here, it's awakening everywhere, through thousands of forms.

So a better motivation for finding the ultimate in yourself than wanting to become enlightened, or wanting to find God, is actually to want to become free of suffering. The rest is implied. You cannot become free of suffering without finding that dimension in yourself.

But if you're looking for God, the very search already contains an error, because at the beginning of the search you already have a mind object, an object in consciousness that you're looking for. Or even if you're looking for your true self, at the beginning of the search is already the error. How can you be successful if at the beginning of the search you've already gone wrong?

I'm looking for myself, believing you can find some kind of enhanced version of yourself at some future point. The enlightened me. I'm going to get there one day, I'm going to get there.

What happens if I don't get there? So if you're looking for the enlightened me, or God, whatever it is, that's the beginning of your search. It's like looking at a map that's wrong,

and then you start your journey.

Or you look at a signpost that's pointing that way, and you walk in the direction where it's not, it's this way. And that's why so many spiritual seekers are a bit lost out there. Becoming comfortable with not defining who you are anymore to yourself.

That is a kind of innocence then that comes. In some way, like a little child, but with a depth of self-knowledge, a deeper knowing that the child does not have. And yet it has certain things in common with a childlike state where the child looks at the world through non-judgmental eyes and has not yet defined him or herself.

It just is present. The one-year-old baby, especially before the words come and the screen of mind starts getting more and more dense, there is an opening and nothing was more beautiful than looking into the eyes of a baby. Especially a baby that hasn't learned to speak yet or only knows a few words.

And you know when you look into the eyes of the babies, you are not being judged. And normally when you look into the eyes of a human, there's some... Who are you?

I know who I am. Of course, the very reason why we are here, the only reason, is to access that state of consciousness. Not to learn anything new as far as content of your mind is concerned.

So it is easier for you to be yourself. Be yourself. Interesting expression with many levels of meaning.

It can be a very superficial thing that means fully express your conditioning. Don't hold anything back. Could be one meaning of be yourself.

Or the deeper meaning could be to be nobody in particular. Be being. Don't be anybody.

Be being. Be consciousness. Be yourself.

Again, very important point. Do not resist the objects that arise in the space of now. Because the space of now is another word for who you are.

Now is another word for who you are. The space in which all things arise, that which never goes away, without which there's no life. It is the unmanifested life itself.

And within it, all things manifest. And then demanifest. Do not resist the forms that arise.

But be open to whatever the present moment presents. Then the spaciousness that you are beyond the form opens up. You don't have to look for it.

Through the simple bringing a yes to the present moment and the conditions, you become spacious. But you already were spacious. You eternally are the space.

But then you begin to sense it. And what that means in daily life is that in the background, as you move through your life experiences, in the background, there remains something untouched by the experiences. There remains a field of peace.

But in some strange way, that flows also into the world of form. So any human who carries that realization in daily life begins to be an influence in this world of form. It's almost as if the unmanifested entered, seeped into the manifested.

You can't quite see it. You can't say, there it is. And things change.

But that's not the reason why we are engaged in this. We are not here to change the world. That's a byproduct of realization.

If your purpose, life purpose is to change the world, you're again starting with the wrong map. And the only place where you can truly know another human being, the eternally true relationship, is there when only, when that dimension is present in your life. It's not through definitions or attaching yourself to some form that love arises in this world.

As you know, the conventional meaning of love is some kind of one form attaches itself to another form, hoping to find some kind of fulfillment or become more complete or bigger through that. But true love is something else. It is a self-recognition.

When you have not defined yourself to yourself and you look at another human being, then the compulsion to define the other human being through thought is no longer there. Because it is only through the defined, mentally defined sense of self that the compulsion to do the same, what you've already done to yourself, to do that to others arises. So when Jesus says, do not judge or love your neighbor as yourself, it has a deeper meaning.

I believe that he explained it in a bit more detail, but all that we have of his teaching are really fragments because they didn't have tape recorders at the time. And the things were written down many, many years after the teachings. Of course, when you see those statements, you recognize they point to the truth.

But of course, the people who wrote them down didn't understand themselves. So they were already distortions in the moment of writing them down or omissions. So you have not defined yourself.

You no longer rely on self-definition for your sense of identity, your sense of who you are, which is a normal state. It doesn't mean that the form, you say, I must forget my name. No, you know your name and all those things, you know them, but you don't define yourself anymore.

It's just the phenomena. You don't define yourself, then the compulsion to define others, to judge others, and then believe in every statement the mind makes is not there. And

it's only then that a relationship becomes something wholly meaningful.

Because there is a coming together, there's a recognition of the one. You recognize the undefined essence of yourself in the other. And that is love, and it is nothing to do with what the world thinks love is.

It's the recognition of that oneness. It only needs one. It is not a requirement that the other human, when two humans come together, should also be in the state of self-knowledge, which really a better word from the point of view of the mind would be self-ignorance.

Because the undefined self from the point of view of the mind is the state of self-ignorance. Because it's not the self that the mind can know. So it is not a requirement that the other human should also be in that state of spacious presence.

You don't say, I'll recognize your oneness if you recognize mine. Or you complain, you say, he or she doesn't know me in my essence. My parents don't know me.

They don't know who I am in the timeless dimension. And then you go to them and explain them while they watch their TV program. You don't know the timeless I am.

What? So you don't demand that the other should be in the state of freedom. It's enough for you to be free.

And this, even that's not the right expression. There's nobody there to be free. Because again, then it sounds as if you had achieved something.

I have achieved freedom from the world. A new self-definition. It could be.

And it is often at that moment of me two humans meeting, regardless of the situation, maybe they just exchange one or two words or no words in an elevator. Maybe it is some other short lived situation or some longer coming together. It is wonderful if you can recognize yourself in the other.

Very often you will be able to look through. It's like having almost, don't think that anything we say is literally true. Just using some words, the most appropriate words.

If you had a very strong spotlight, a light, and the other human had a dense layer of fog in front of them, which most humans have. Well, it's inside them, but let's just externalize it. They had a dense layer of fog consisting of continuous streams of thoughts and emotions, swirling fog.

So you can't see who is beyond there. All you can see is the form of this fog. It's like some kind of horror movie.

The fog has actually got a face. And if you were identified with the form, you would think

that's the person and he's not very nice. Or who is that?

Or you define the swirling fog. And then if you are present, there is, you are the presence that you are that can often shine through the dense fog, like a very strong light. And it reaches the same dimension in the other.

And it sometimes happens often that something that, I'm just using words, it's not the ultimate truth, just approximation. Something in the other responds because the very same dimension, the unconditioned recognizes itself. So there's in the other, something underneath the fog, often something happens.

And it comes forward to meet the presence that you are. And something of the density suddenly goes. There may still be some fog, but suddenly in the other person, a light shines.

You might even see the eyes change from being dull and lifeless if they're very dense or angry. Suddenly a change comes and some light comes through. And it often happens that the behavior of that person also changes.

They don't know what's happening to them. And then they go off and say, strange what happened just now. And then often the density comes back.

Not necessarily, but usually. But they've had a glimpse. Something happened.

First time I experienced that many, many years ago with somebody who had a very dense mind identification and emotion. That was shortly after the shift happened within from suffering entity to freedom. I sat with her.

She talked incessantly for 20 minutes. And then she stopped talking and says, this isn't important at all, is it? And while I was listening to her, there was only spacious listening.

Just space. And all I said is, when she said, this isn't important at all, I said, no, it isn't. Something happened in her.

The next morning, she was a neighbor of mine. Next morning she saw me again and said, that night was the first night in years that I slept well, like a baby. What did you do to me?

Nothing. I didn't do anything. It's nothing to do with doing.

So that was a glimpse. Perhaps the beginning of a transformation. Once you've had a glimpse, it's easier for it to come back to again.

In some traditions, it might be called initiation. But that's too big a word. Too big a mind object that you can attach yourself to.

Another area to work with, to bring, to be conscious of yourself in a deeper sense. I believe the Gurdjieff had the expression, the teacher lived in early 20th century, self-remembering. And of course it can be misunderstood, but he meant being the presence while things happen.

Knowing yourself as the presence while things happen. Now, know yourself as the presence in this retreat situation. When you are not being challenged by any condition arising.

There too, of course. But here you have nature. Whether it's wet or dry, it doesn't matter.

It's beautiful. It's nature. Use nature and bring to it as you perceive.

The leaves in the tree, moving the leaves. Trees quivering leaves, branches moving, blades of grass moving, birds, clouds. Sensing, perceiving nature.

And again, if as much as possible, not defining it through words. Perceiving nature, sense perception, flowers, and be alert, present. And then be aware that there is a dimension.

It's not just the two dimensions here. There is that what you perceive. Yes.

And that which makes the perception possible, which is your presence or the presence that you are. You sense the presence, the underlying presence when you perceive nature. Then you have the formless and formed coming together.

And then you see that the form has a depth to it that before wasn't there. A depth and an aliveness that wasn't there when all you saw was the form through your mind, through your mind. Then the form is relatively lifeless.

It has no depths and no true aliveness to it. And that's why people go around nature and they're not really there. Their mind is still active.

Either they're thinking about something totally different, the stock market, while they're walking through a beautiful forest or grove or beach thinking, my shares, what's going to happen to them? Hedge funds are in a critical condition. And there's all the beauty or the best of cases, they're going and defining everything they see.

Oh, isn't that interesting? And they have the knowledge to do it. Now there are two types of, you know, in some countries, bird watching is a, some people have that as a hobby.

Now most, it's of course the most exquisite thing to watch a bird, but most bird watchers are bird definers so they're very knowledgeable about birds. And in many cases, they are trapped in their definitions of birds. So they never really see the incredible grace and beauty and sacredness of that creature, the perfection of the form, how it flies, how it sits, totally one with the totality no decision-making like humans.

It doesn't sit on a branch and says, should I fly off or not? We have a problem here. What if I don't reach that branch?

And then there's a gust might come. It's just beautiful expression of oneness. But you miss that when all you have is the definition of that bird and you repeat it in your mind.

You don't really see it. I believe it was Krishnamurti who said, teach the child the name of the bird and he will never see the bird again. That's putting it strongly.

But there's some very fundamental truth here because the moment you teach the child the name of the bird, there will be a seeing for a second and then there will be the arising of the definition. Oh, that's a such and such and that's it. No further connection unless the parent encourages further connection.

Says, look, don't encourage perception, spacious perception. Don't dismiss the perception the moment it has been labeled. So here we go about perceiving and at the same time not losing awareness of your own presence.

Let's rephrase that. Not losing awareness of the presence that you are. Let's rephrase that.

Not losing awareness of the awareness that you are. So there is a field of awareness is there without which there would be no perception. There would be no bird.

Would anything be there? That's a question for philosophers. Put that aside.

There certainly would not be a bird if there's no perception of the bird. You can start if you want to pursue that in your philosophy. You start with a rainbow and say, if you look at a rainbow, you say, okay, if I was not standing here and no other human either, would that rainbow be there?

Because rainbow has no actual existence as an object. It's light coming through, filtered through water, crystals or whatever and broken up into, but if nobody sees it, it doesn't happen. So you can start from there and then complete your PhD in philosophy ten years later.

Awareness then is there as another word for it, the undefined yourself, undefined self or the space of now that you are. And how, this is how nature can be helpful to us here and as a, in this period that is set a time, set as part for practice and it requires a certain alertness. You need to really look and then sense who it is or what it is that's looking.

There's not only what you're looking at, there's also who is looking and that's not a question that requires an answer. You sense that which is looking as yourself and that is always peace, a vibrantly alive peace in the background. And to go through nature in such a way is just wonderful.

I would even go so far as to say that you add a very important dimension to nature when you perceive it through the depths of your being because ultimately you are not separate from it and as you perceive it, nature knows itself through you, its own beauty, its sacredness and everything is more than what you see. You can sense then that there isn't, what you see through sense perception is only a surface and for you to see beauty, you need already to have gone a little deeper within yourself beyond the form of the form. If you say, oh, that's a pretty flower, that's not seeing beauty, it's a mechanical, mental thing.

Oh, what a pretty flower, I wonder what it's called. That's the surface world. I think I'll take it home.

It won't look good in my living room. So here we use, then we have another level of teaching here, which is the natural world that surrounds you. You can go for walks, I'm told.

You have to find out where the footpath trails go. There's a beach somewhere. There's nature everywhere.

And what really, what beauty is, is just to sense the depths, but the depths that you sense out there that you're in. So we have so much teaching happening here. Every moment, becoming comfortable with, also with being, simple being.

You don't always need to do anything here. Be, can you be with yourself? What does that mean?

Just sit, just stand, or lie. And there's nothing particular happening. And feel the being or the presence that you are.

And to know yourself in such a way is, in a deeper sense, joy. The only true joy, which again is very different from what one calls joy or pleasure. That's I believe the title for our retreat is the joy of being.

That's what it is. It derives really from knowing yourself as consciousness. And that is the being that you are, which in Indians, Indians have a word, certain words for things that we don't have words for because there's such an ancient tradition of self-realization there.

Sat, being is the word, is sat, I believe. It's the realization of being. Which is consciousness.

Cit, which is joy or bliss, ananda. And that is a single thing. That's why they string it together, make it into one word almost.

Sat, cit, ananda, is that. And it is no more than being in touch with the undefined self.

The Buddha never wanted to say that because he was very aware that the moment you use a certain word, you make it into an object of consciousness.

So the self, the Buddha denied because he wanted to discourage humans from making the formless reality and timeless reality of who you are into a mental object. So he said, there is no self, it's an illusion. And of course, what he talks about is the form self.

But he didn't want to use the word self either for the ultimate because that would make it into an object in your consciousness. So this is a so-called negative tradition of teaching where you simply deny the reality of form. And what you're left with is the formless, but you never name it.

Very clever, very wise because you know what has been done with other teachings that used positive statements, the kingdom of heaven, pointing to the same dimension but it's so easy to misinterpret that. And then you put it elsewhere and into the future and it's ours and so on. So the denial, the teachings that deny the reality of form can be very powerful if they are understood but can be also misleading if they're only approached with the mind that the mind looks at the teaching and the mind says this is a nihilistic religion.

As the Western intellectuals and professors when they started studying Buddhism called Buddhism nihilistic, life denying religion. Is it? Then why is the Buddha smiling?

Because all the good Buddha statues have a slight smile and the bad ones look serious. Why is the Buddha smiling? Because he's in touch with the formless which he called emptiness.

Then the world of form loses its heaviness and seriousness and that's why the Buddha is smiling. And that's why you smile whenever that is present, you are present, externally or internally, the seriousness and heaviness disappears from the world. Things may still be important but never absolutely important when you're in touch with the unmanifested or as the Buddha called it, the unborn, the uncreated.

I love that teaching because it's just, it's so hard to make that into a mind object. You just can't. The unborn.

Wonderful. So if used rightly, it can be a very powerful pointer to the truth. Realizing the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested, the unformed.

Buddha said, there is, oh monks, the unmanifested, the uncreated, the unborn, the unformed. If there were not the uncreated, the unmanifested, the unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the manifested, the created, the born, and the formed. That's more or less how the sutra goes.

Continuous practice in our situation, this retreat, use every moment. Remember to be

here now and what that means in its steps. Being, I am, I am implies be.

I am here now. That's really all you need. I am here now.

One other thing we, another level of teaching that we may look at the next session is the humans in our situation here. The human interaction and the condition patterns that arise very easily the moment you open your mouth and start talking. To finish, just one simple demonstration of form and formlessness.

Sound, follow the sound with your attention. Consciousness became a form. It was born into a form, auditory perception.

Follow the sound with your attention again. And when the sound has subsided, be aware of the presence, the attention itself. Aware of awareness.

Now be aware of that before the sound, during the sound, and after the sound. Thank you. I suggest you just sit here for just one or two or three minutes and just be with the empty chair up here and yourself there.

I am here now. Thank you. As we talk or as you live this in your daily life here, questions may arise and in the second part of the retreat there will be opportunities of course to ask questions should there be any questions left by then.

You may have realized or be realizing that this is a very revolutionary shift in consciousness from the viewpoint of spirituality it is a new spirituality let's put it like that for a moment without an object not without God without God as an object. Now that was already had been attempted 2,600 years ago by Osamu Siddhartha the Buddha a very brave attempt and of course Buddhism is still alive and an influence in the world but as far as 95 or more percent of Buddhists are concerned the Buddha the messenger has become the object has taken the place of God although he is not called God in daily life that's how they practice it for all intents and purposes the mind could not tolerate spirituality without an object because the mind lives in and through making mind objects I believe there's a better chance now for this to spread it's another wave coming and this time I'm sure the messenger is not going to be made into a God thank God so it is spirituality without an object which does not mean spirituality without the transcendental dimension that would be absurd not mean without God but not God as that thing there or that entity there God as the formless one formless timeless one life that you are in your essence and every everything is in its essence an expression of that so it is revolutionary from that point of view it is also revolutionary from another point of view because it is about an entirely different way of being in the world where that which has dominated human existence for thousands of years no longer does so and what is that thinking thought which has been primary now becomes secondary is replaced by presence awareness as this happens many changes happen externally and internally this looks takes looks after itself you don't have to do anything the teacher Krishnamurti was

convinced that the brain cells would be undergoing a mutation as this different consciousness comes in and he would always say what is needed is a mutation of the brain cells because of course he saw how mad the human mind is a brief mention something that may have occurred to one or two of you now we do not want to get into philosophy or into science I know a little bit of philosophy most of what I've done is new I've forgotten fortunately but I know very little about science so we can't talk about that that's good what is the relationship just a brief moment looking what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness now there are quite a few scientists around who will even deny the existence of consciousness because you can't see it or measure it because they're always looking out there to find consciousness they don't realize that which is looking through their eyes and through their mind is consciousness they are consciousness looking for itself through the microscope or whatever it is of course it's not there you can never find it the same as the spiritual seeker can never find it because looking for an object a mind object or if the spiritual seeker wants to realize him or herself he's looking for another mind object me, me the perfect version of me in the future so they're all doing the same thing and therefore of course they don't find the scientist doesn't find consciousness and the spiritual seeker doesn't find liberation or God or himself because there's an object they're looking for however we cannot doubt the fact that seemingly if a brick falls on your head you lose consciousness or if somebody puts something in your coffee or tea some drug you might lose consciousness or you take something that affects your consciousness and suddenly you behave in a weird way so there are chemical things seemingly that affect consciousness so is it then the case as some scientists would say that consciousness is a by-product of chemical reactions in the brain and ultimately does not exist but some kind of illusory thing that they don't know what it is that happened accidentally we're getting into some very weird territory now or is it perhaps that the that consciousness itself took part in making the brain in order to come into this world in a focalized way and when you seem to lose consciousness a brick falls on your head or whatever it is perhaps all that happens then is that the one consciousness that pervades everything no longer expresses itself through this channel into this world it withdraws it can't go through that channel anymore and it's fine nothing is affected so one could look upon the brain as a kind of lens that you have in the same way that you can take a magnifying glass and hold it up in the sunlight and then it gets very sharp ray you can even light dry grass or paper with it but the sunlight is everywhere it pervades everything this is not an ultimate explanation but an intuitive intuitive perception so the question then was does consciousness does the brain make consciousness or does consciousness make the brain and the brain of course is the most subtle the least understood of all the organs of the body of unbelievable complexity we may know little even about other parts of the body how they ultimately function but about the brain we know very little indeed nobody knows what a thought is I'll start so then if the brain makes consciousness how did the brain make itself now we're getting into philosophy I'm just putting that question there because of course we see that incredible intelligence was already needed to make the

brain that intelligence is prior to that to any form and this applies to anything that you see in nature or in the universe it's an expression of the one the temporary expression of an underlying life that is formless but all this I only give to you to satisfy a few questions that may arise in the mind that otherwise could block you now it's important to realize that the mind will never stop asking questions most of which are irrelevant to awakening so even as we are talking now in some minds here more questions have popped up yeah but then what about and if we started going into it there would of course be no end because it is the nature of the mind to doubt and to ask questions and to analyze and to cut into smaller and smaller segments we are not here for that we are just here to give the mind enough so that it doesn't go completely mad and runs out of the room and carries the body with it this is not about feeding your mind of course just enough to keep you here so that the mind doesn't say this doesn't make sense I can't balance so the revolutionary thing then is that this this shift of consciousness that is taking place and you are at the forefront of this because you are here but please don't make this into a new identity for yourself this shift is the revolutionary one it means that from now on you will be thinking less and less still able to use your mind when needed but no longer run by it completely different energy takes its place of a completely different vibrational frequency and of as you know we temporarily call it presence awareness pure consciousness I say temporarily because what we call it doesn't matter what we call it is not it you cannot know what it is by listening to a word about it you can only know what it is by being it and that's why we are here not for explanations or philosophy but by being that change and whatever we say here points to that and is meant to be helpful so that this person on the chair here facilitates this birth and the birth process can be can take a while it is a process in some cases it can be quick in others in most cases it's a process of a gradual disidentification from the stream of thinking and the emotions that go with it and then a frequent slipping back into the old many people are telling me that at least often it happens they go back and are just as unconscious as they were twenty years ago for a while and then they wake up again presence returns and that is fine don't believe the mind when that happens at the moment you wake up again and have just realized that you've fallen back into an old reaction an old pattern of behavior an old way of thinking repetitive thinking when you wake up even then the mind will still come in and then tell you that there's no point in even trying to be present because it's obvious that you're no good at it it may sound familiar to one or two of you the mind will immediately you become present and even then the mind will try to come in again and the very fact that you've become present says you see you can't do it because you've just been unconscious for two days so and again here it is again the question of not believing your thinking just having a spacious relationship with your thoughts so not like before you and here's your thought and here's the I consciousness and before it was one I and thought one the I asleep dreaming the dream of thought and then there's the separation that's the awakening and then occasionally you fall back and then you go again and there's thought even after you've separated from thought thought may continue and say what it says but you know it you have a spacious relationship with

thought your thought it's not really your thought it's thought when it's not fed by identification it loses its strength it can't create havoc in your life anymore it can't make you unhappy anymore because a lot of what it says is either false or a partial truth it's not the whole truth no thought can encapsulate the whole truth so that's the separation and that's why we're here continuous we're like a new species that's just beginning to live in a new way not in any case it's not yet very good at it just as the first fishes that started to crawling on land can't have been very good at it for some reason they had to I would say the waters there must have been a vast expanse of water that was gradually receding cut off from the rest of the ocean a vast and then the fishes rightly what do we do the water is diminishing we have to do something else this is where humans have arrived at we've created so much havoc on the planet we have to do something else now what do we do there is a moment of crisis survival is threatened and it's only then that the fish wants to see ok let's see get out of the water and then it starts the first the first attempts this is the first attempts in humans of living free of thought and then of course just as the fishes did you quickly run back into thought however I know that many of you are already more advanced than that you have already developed little things that are going to be legs and some can even run but occasionally you may still like to jump back in the water the old way which the mind says is so much easier which of course is another of the lies of the mind it's so much more difficult to live in that way thinking identified with thinking deriving your sense of who you are from thinking dreadful place so you use now everything in your life experience to see if you can approach it in a new way we mentioned nature where you become alert and spacious as you perceive even the smallest detail the subtlest thing and you sense an underlying peace and aliveness as you contemplate nature it's a beauty there and it has no form the form is only very superficial so it gets you in touch with yourself and you're not thinking when you contemplate nature and as you know one of the main practices I have to repeat it because it's easy to forget meeting what arises in the present moment without resistance there also the spaciousness that you are the formless arises and you lose it the moment you react against something that arises in the present moment the moment the old because all reactive patterns are old I'm not talking about response response is something reaction comes out of presence a challenge comes in you look you face it completely being absolutely present and if something needs to be done response happens action happens reaction is an old conditioned behaviour pattern that many situations trigger and they are usually dysfunctional because they come from the past so you meet the present through the past and it never quite works so reaction and it's always against something so that is fundamental one first the most important way of accessing the new consciousness is to meet what arises in the now without inner resistance to allow it that implies many things other human beings that's about probably the most challenging thing in your life the fact that there are other humans and many of them are difficult so far as to say as some people feel that actually as you know I've quoted it before Jean-Paul Sartre said hell is other people in the original French hell is the others and of course that is as far as the ego is concerned to a large extent is true

except of course to make it even more difficult is that the ego needs the others as well as hates the others it means that you drop many thoughts that you had before about other people as unnecessary as blocking the space consciousness in you and you see people behaving in certain ways according to their conditioning and you no longer formulate some kind of judgment and make their conditioning into their identity you just don't you see it and yet nothing arises which means you don't give it any power whatsoever the unconsciousness I mean if you don't if you give the unconsciousness in another person power by calling it something and equating it with who that person is you immediately become trapped also in a narrow object consciousness because you believe in your judgments so the thing has come the I and the thought have come together again and you reinforce the unconsciousness in the other and because in miracles it says something like what you see in another you strengthen in yourself I would formulate it slightly differently that is what you react to in another you strengthen in yourself what you judge in another you strengthen in yourself because no matter who you meet in this world at some point their behavior will have certain elements of ego in it not surprising the ego has been dominating humanity for thousands of years so that is not a personal deficiency of anybody that they have ego you still have an ego I don't want anything to do with you so so you look through that or rarely it may be helpful to point out when you do this don't step on my toe every time you walk past or something like that that's fine to say your behavior in some cases if they are very obnoxious you could say this behavior is not acceptable so maybe I'll remove myself or maybe you should remove yourself it's fine and again there's no condemnation and those are extreme cases in most cases these are little things that otherwise get blown up and the next thing is you talk to a friend about what he or she had said or did or failed to do or failed to say and then the next thing things the origin of gossip one could write a book about that the origin of gossip and the ego is back the ego is mind identification and it feels superior if you can say something critical about another it may be true but it's only the ego and the other it's only unconscious it may be true or it may not be true maybe it is a misinterpretation another source of enormous conflict in human relationships the mind misinterpreting what somebody else does then acting as if my misinterpretation which is a thought were the reality so let's take something very simple but one can take very complex examples of that somebody in the street you say hello and he goes past you and doesn't greet you who does he think he is how dare he I was very friendly I said hello how are you he looked straight ahead walked right past me I can't believe it I always knew he thought himself superior to others and then you talk to your friend about it and then your friend says you know last year he did the same to me I know he can't be trusted and then you know something else he did two years ago and the truth is this person is very much in his mind and when he walks in the street he doesn't even know where he is going he only has peripheral awareness of his surroundings because he is so much absorbed in his thinking so he doesn't see people easily even if they come close to him and say hello 90% of his attention is in thinking and he is walking along the street has just enough attention outside not to bump into things and that's why he didn't greet

you and out of that is I'm choosing a simple example but many large part of human relationship is based on misunderstandings mental interpretations that you believe in that are not true or mental interpretations that blow up a tiny thing into something big so what you don't need the awakened person says hello and the other person doesn't say hello and he will pass this it's fine I don't need you don't need the hello to make you feel better it was good that you said hello you don't interpret it because you know there are many ways of possibilities of why you didn't say hello why even venture an interpretation you allow this person to do what he does or to fail to do what he does it's fine another small example of egoic reaction in everyday life because you can see it if you just see the mechanics underlying one simple situation same mechanics apply to the power struggles in the board room or wherever people are meeting and engaging in dysfunctional behavior which is everywhere organizations committees the people who laugh have some experience of committees some people find driving stressful some people some people and they complain about other drivers it never occurred to me to complain about another driver because another driver is just like a gust of wind or rain or shower that comes down if necessary you take evasive action if you can it's no more than that and if another driver shouts you idiot as they sometimes do the egoic the normal egoic reaction would be to immediately shout something back and then it might proliferate from there road rage it's called so it's the ego wants to repair itself because it feels injured when somebody criticizes you you idiot seems to take a whole chunk out of your self image so the ego has to go into instant repair modality and it does that by shouting back something worse than idiot and then it feels a little bit better it has repaired itself you've taken a chunk out of me and I've taken a bigger chunk out of you out of the image however it may not stop there because then the drivers may stop their car and want to fight it out this is just one little relatively insignificant unconsciousness but everywhere similar patterns happen it is because people are identified with their active patterns and with thoughts that come up in their mind lack of spaciousness lack of being there as the space and you're just there as the object fragile trying to defend yourself against other objects so as far as human relationship is concerned you in the new consciousness it is easier to overlook the unconsciousness in others don't strengthen it by dwelling on it as a spiritual teacher called Swami beyond ananda says he's a he lives in states in California I think he's very humorous and occasionally very quite wise too he says if you see a fault he's in California so there are many geographical faults if you see a fault this is his message to the people in California if you see a fault don't dwell on it very true so you overlook or you look through the unconsciousness in others thus not strengthening the unconsciousness in you because the tendency to judge is unconscious it's a mechanical mind pattern relationships of course are the greatest practice and always tell you where you are at in your spiritual awakening they give you good feedback if you remove yourself from relationships human relationships it's very easy to fool yourself that you have attained ultimate liberation because you're avoiding all contact and sit alone in your nice garden all day meditating somebody brings the food it's always healthy and good somebody else gives you massage

treatments and so on no challenges just as long as you don't have a relationship with anybody so you have to pay somebody to bring the food pay somebody to give you a massage and then it's fine but you can only really know yourself because your unconsciousness or otherwise is reflected in your relationships with others they reflect back to you where you are at so if conflicts are frequent in your relationships if the main source of problems in your life are the relationships then use that as a mirror because that will tell you here you are not conscious here you are creating conflict oh no it's the others who are creating conflict it's always it's them people are dreadful especially spiritual people I have enough with spiritual or spiritual people they talk about spiritual things and behave unconsciously so the only person whose awakening is important as far as you are concerned is yourself now since we are in this retreat setting I suggest you start in our retreat setting you may have occasionally conversations with others that's fine you meet people that's good first of all see if you can step out of the usual patterns of saying things and that starts with the practice of listening to another human being when they talk can you listen in that spaciousness presence where there is no thought but just the space of awareness and you are looking at the person and listening not concerned with your own thing that you want to get out the person saying something about politics or spirituality or George W.

Bush and you are just waiting to get your thing out and you can feel the pressure that's building up not realizing that the person who tells you he loves George W. Bush was an actor paid by me to challenge you just kidding there was a Zen master who said don't seek enlightenment just let go of your opinions what he said literally was just cease to cherish opinions that's all you need stop looking for enlightenment that is silly stop cherishing your opinions cherishing really means believing in them completely and being having your sense of self in your opinion then you cherish it as yourself you love your opinion as yourself and what is an opinion an opinion a bundle of thoughts so you are in love with a bundle of thoughts in your head and you are equating the bundle of thoughts with who you are and then your opinions have an enormous force behind them it's the force of the I identification now the egoic I wants two things it wants to grow expand and if necessary defend itself from the opposite shrinking so the opinion is important in both regards because the moment the opinion comes out of your mouth the ego grows and especially because you know so much better than those people who have just expressed their opinion which is entirely erroneous now you are going to put them right and that will teach them a lesson or maybe it won't maybe it will harden and strengthen their opinion which will then come back at you so here self-observation is very helpful let's say somebody you are at a table somebody says this or that and you feel a strong impulse to get in there with your opinion it doesn't it makes no difference to the situation because the situation is not about what are we going to do now so your opinion has no actual influence on anything that you do as a group or as two people it's just there it wants to get out observe the pressure behind it and it may well be that you know better than the nonsense that these people have just been saying and yet observe the impulse behind it

and so you have a relationship with your opinion rather than being it feel the mental emotional push that wants to get out and then you may practice with see if I can just let it be this is the opinion but it already doesn't need don't put pressure on it don't say okay I know it wants to get out but holding it in I mustn't say what I really think that's another weird expression what I really think you're talking about the conditioning of your mind what I really think is overvalued because it's really it's the conditioning of your mind that makes you think what you really think so it's not such a great precious thing what you really think so have a relationship with the mental emotional movements rather than being them so that they exist then in the space that you are you step back for a moment there it is you feel it but then you are the space in which this thing exists and then you have a choice you can speak it and if you speak it then it will be different you can still explain that the ego force won't be behind it you can still speak forcefully in fact you are much more likely to get across your viewpoint if it is free of ego if you are simply stating the facts but there is an enormous difference between stating the facts and having an ego behind the facts that wants to triumph and survive through this and that's of course unconscious when you state the facts with ego you are not saying to yourself ok my ego wants to you don't know what's happening that's why we call it unconscious an enormous difference and so you can actually communicate reach people the chances are much greater of reaching a person with your communication when it is free of the force of ego that wants to triumph or protect itself has identified with a mental position is challenging the other person's mental position two mental positions persons another word for it battling it out no space whatsoever in the relationship and here we come to the crux of what the essence of a true relationship is the essence of the true relationship is space in any even the shortest relationship the fundamental question is is there space in this relationship and you have to ask that question no matter whether it's you are just meeting a person for a few seconds it is still important or is are you acknowledging the consciousness that you are the presence at this moment of interaction thus also acknowledging the other person's essence beyond the function of that other person because many relationships in this world are to do with different kinds of functions that people have so they meet because he has this job he wants to sell you something and you want to buy something for example so he is the the seller and you are the customer or whatever just one example of a function so can you meet the other yes the function operates but is that the main thing in the relationship well for most egoically trapped people it is the other person is the customer there is no human being there there is a mind form customer we already talked about how a mind form becomes the screen that prevents you from really really communicating and being with the other person so you are relating to this mind form you are not interested there is no human being there for the egoic self when it has made another person into a mind form there is just a deadened thing that thing there and that is relatively harmless in a relationship between customer and client client and sales person but the same mechanism would function somebody who wants to kill you because he calls you this or that he has reduced you in his mind to a lifeless abstraction he cannot feel his own reality and so he

cannot feel yours before the violent person inflicts violence he has already reduced the other to a mental abstraction but before he has reduced the other to a mental abstraction he has done it to himself or herself so remaining open here you practice it as you talk to people listen spacious listening when the other person is talking if a strong charged opinion comes up you are spacious with that you observe that you could might express it then freely without the ego or you might say there is no need to express it you can just let it be it doesn't matter you have not shrunk by not expressing your opinion the ego thinks so you have not become less by remaining silent you have become more in essence because the depth of who you are is present and that brings us to an important point there are the the ego wants to be it wants to stand out there is always one way or another the ego wants to assert its existence and even an ego who feels very very shy it's just a reversal of that the shy ego is afraid of other people's reactions so it doesn't want to stand out but it's a hidden desire to stand out too I'm just too afraid to speak up because others might criticize me so some egos may keep silent because of that but there is the desire is still there the ego wants to stand out in one way or another and expressing your opinion when nobody has asked for it is just one way of course of doing that the space consciousness is the opposite movement the ego wants to be a mountain the space consciousness is the valley so as we bring a balance into our lives and invite the space consciousness in as opposed to the object consciousness we become a valley that expression is used in the Tao Te Ching the ancient Chinese book where it says be the valley of the universe it says things like for example the great river the great powerful river is so great and powerful because it lies lower than all the other smaller rivers that flow into it so because it has taken the lower position it is so powerful and there is a big secret hidden there a way of living that aligns you with the power of the universe and there you see that even the biggest mountain is really a form of weakness the need to say me, me look at me or even says don't look at me not needing to be anybody in particular and you become a valley not needing to assert yourself but be there as a quiet power lie low quiet no thought that is the power of the Tao as described in the Tao Te Ching the valley spirit it's called and that is just another way of speaking of this fundamental reality of being the space rather than being the form and that implies that things many things change in your life the unconscious compulsion for example to defend yourself mechanically is not there you don't immediately go there is more you can allow things nobody can take anything away from who you are in your essence no matter what they say about you they can only take something away from the egoic self image and if you are hurt by a comment that somebody makes only the egoic self image can be hurt the consciousness that you are cannot be hurt by it it is totally invulnerable not invulnerable because it has put up a barrier invulnerable because it opposes nothing so you can go go right through any comment passes through so if somebody says you fool if there is an egoic being there then it will hit the shell of the ego that's what it feels like it's like somebody is getting a hammer and says you fool you are your pain body is so huge and of course the moment says your pain body is so huge it will trigger your pain body and then there is the other way of simply being there as

presence and then somebody says you fool nothing happened it went straight through so now let's just one slightly again the same as you might have noticed I talk about only one thing all the time because nothing else matters it's just different approaches sometimes I come from here or from there or from there or from there and so it sometimes might look like different topics but it isn't really now to put it bluntly what this is all about is to go through life and think little or not at all a lot of the time you are on your way towards that in the meantime you have a more spacious relationship with thought already otherwise you couldn't stand being here you have already a spacious relationship there are already periods in your life it doesn't matter how long when there is presence and you're not thinking even if you don't know it my mind stopped to a large extent not completely but 80 percent 85 percent of mind activity when the inner shift happened mind activity got reduced I knew that only later by about 85 80 percent 85 percent and suddenly there was peace and aliveness and it was every moment was wonderful why? because the mental noise was gone it took me 3 or 4 years to realize that that was the reason why there was so much peace suddenly so I didn't even know that thinking had slowed down significantly become reduced significantly I knew it only as peace and my mind did not recognize the absence of thinking because the mind only recognizes mind so don't look to your mind to tell you how free you are of thinking don't look to your also being free of thinking is not memorable so you can't remember it as such the mind remembers things so I'm quite sure that there are several of you whose mind is telling you that you are never there but that without knowing it you have significant moments when you are not thinking but you just don't remember it it all all it means is in those moments you feel alive and there's a joy that arises and you're fully present you don't know that you're not thinking but you're not thinking now this is fine but if you actually can know that at that moment you're not thinking now how do you know that?

you can't know it by having the thought oh now I'm not thinking this could happen too and that of course puts an end to it now that knowing is not a conceptual knowing through mental formulation it is a knowing that is post conceptual not pre conceptual that's how the dog knows you pre conceptual this is post conceptual knowing where you simply you know that now there's no thinking but you're not thinking that you can sense that you can sense the presence and know and some people first get a glimpse of that suddenly get very enthusiastic and that can be a little dangerous too because oh I'm not thinking and sometimes they become spiritual teachers too quickly before that is fully fully established before this state pervades the entire being they're not thinking ok I've got to write a book about this somebody was telling me about a spiritual teacher they met who came visiting from India and he must have been new to it I assume a recent spiritual teacher and he was so enthusiastic about being in a state of no mind he would tell people now watch me closely he said when I clap my hands I'll be in a state of no mind bum this is the state of no mind and he was right he was in the state of no mind that's it so catch the gaps as they arise and be conscious of the gaps without labelling

them just so they arise spontaneously and then at other times you can actually consciously not perhaps yet everyone so I'm just saying this this is for those for whom it is true now already you can consciously choose not to think now the philosophers among you will say who is choosing and so on and I will tell you of course the universe is choosing not to think through you you are not separate from that it's just a perception let's say you choose you can choose to be free of thought when it's not needed thought is not needed and there are many instances and situations where thought is not needed this is not a good thing connected with willpower it is presence presence is not not force force is against something presence is never against anything presence is not against thought willpower if you exert it and stop your mind through willpower you would be against thought and then thought would only become stronger while you are holding it back you could while you are holding it back it just grows like the boiling kettle I'm not thinking and then finally when you breathe out a reaction comes somebody comes into the room you shout leave me alone leave me alone the kettle is boiling over presence is never against anything it's not against thinking it's vast it contains everything so you choose presence and in presence thoughts may occasionally drift in and out but there are stretches without thought consciousness without thought now some people who are good at certain sports or certain dangerous activities may have a certain familiarity with that state mountaineers among you climb rock walls or mount everest or know that in the moment of climbing the wall you're not thinking because if you were thinking you probably wouldn't be here now you would be and sports people when there is mastery in that moment of performance and it moves through you beautifully expressed in a not so well-known film the legend of Baga Vance where somebody is learning to play a person who is very good at golf then he goes into the war and through negative experiences he loses it and he comes back and then he wants to learn again how to be good at golf and he gets a teacher the caddy he's a hidden spiritual teacher and he teaches him how to play golf again but in reality he's teaching him to be present and you see a few shots of what it means to be present when you play golf the thoughtless look the absolute presence in which the thing happens and it's even formulated what he's teaching him it says in the film is how to stop thinking without falling asleep that's his teaching how to stop thinking without falling asleep how to stop thinking so this is another aspect of what this is all about this is meditation not as a separate activity but pervading your entire life and if presence is your practice whether or not you meditate or continue your practice if it is your practice it doesn't matter anymore because you bring it into every moment you choose to be free of thinking when thinking is not needed which is just amazing a lot of the time thinking is not needed and something else takes over do you become stupid? no you become intelligent you were stupid before the normal state is stupid every every egoic mind is basically stupid they may have PhD's but basically stupid that's why the world is in such a mess it's basically stupid unintelligent or as Buddhists sometimes call it unskillful action unskillful action so the not thinking is vital in relationships because the not thinking brings space into the relationship without it there is no space in the relationship and without space in the relationship soon there will be conflict so in any

human encounter remember to just ask or to sense is there space here and this depends on you whether there is space or not am I bringing in the space am I here as space or am I here as a little me am I here as space or am I here as somebody a person who wants something who feels uneasy who needs more of this or more of that who needs to protect him or herself who either likes or dislikes the form of the other person vital question at any moment when you are relating to somebody especially of course important also in your if you have an intimate relationship partners marriage whatever is there space there it's up to you you are the bringer of space and what is that stop thinking when you for example when you are listening to your partner that means you are truly listening and when you are truly listening your attention is yes on the words of the other person but the larger part of your attention is on the field through which the listening happens you are there as consciousness primarily and then the words are there this is what happened today and then he said to me and then I did that and then he threw me out and then that happened and I said okay you are listening but you are not drawn exclusively into the words which are forms verbalized thought forms you are not drawn into each thought form and thus feed it and contribute your own thought form to it because then you get you are back in the level of mind so in that situation yes you know you listen to the words but they are always secondary you are aware of the awareness of yourself you are the listening the field that is the space and of course we are mentioning relationships here it is not just in relationships in any encounter in any situation whatever condition arises you need to be there primarily as consciousness and secondary as a person and then you are free and you bring freedom to others the space of no thought of course every creative person knows well even if they don't know it creativity comes out of that gap any new creative insight whether it is just an original idea whether it is a joke because even the joke requires some connection with the space out of which all creativity comes I saw an interview with Woody Allen where he says really the only thing I can do is tell jokes but he is so good at it and even during the interview one joke after another comes spontaneously out of him he has some connection with some area in him where there is space and the jokes come out of that ready made and he contributes a certain amount of freedom to the world through laughter and a person like Beethoven has a space out of which a whole ready made symphony comes and he just writes it down as if it had always existed and the great all the great things they are so strange it is almost as if they had always been there and some people only have a moment an entire lifetime at the moment of creativity five minutes and they produce something that survives but that I am just mentioning is one of the ways in which presence can operate that it is not the ultimate purpose to create some symphony or to create something that survives you some people do some people don't it is not what is essential what is essential is that you bring in this energy field the new energy into this world whether or not you will become an instrument of some form of creation is a secondary matter some do some don't it is not of primary importance there was a case of a man in South Africa I think it was perhaps in the thirties or forties he was a musician he had a band and he had to find some new composition and for the

next day and he was there at night and then suddenly this tune came to him and so that was played and being in a black person in South Africa he had very few rights so after a couple of years he sold this tune for 3 or 5 dollars to a company and then it turned out 30 years 40 years later recently last year I think it was he had died already and finally his widow will get millions and millions and millions of dollars because that tune went all over the world it came out of one moment of presence it goes the lion sleeps tonight the lion sleeps tonight and it has it has something there this survives because it has there is an essence it comes out of it is out of the creative space of life itself that's why it's spread all over the world you can feel the essence of it in any creative work that comes out of that you can feel it but the most creative thing is to be here as an agent of transformation through the way in which you live and through the energy that you emanate through your behaviour and your very being your relationships and so on so what the form that the new consciousness takes varies from person to person it expresses itself in different ways the essence is the same spacious presence what comes after that varies and I'm not concerned with that because that looks after itself spacious presence the essence and this applies whether you are going to live for another 50 years or whether you are going to live for a few more days this teaching is equally valid because it is the truth of who you are finding that has nothing to do with time any teaching that is true must be true no matter where you are at in your life it must be true for somebody who has only one more day to live or for somebody who has still got their whole life in front of them ahead of them it must be true in all cases if you get some kind of teaching that gives you requires you to have time it's not the spiritual teaching and as you might have noticed your past is irrelevant here as the new arises whether your past was painful or not is irrelevant whether your past was chaotic or not is irrelevant here as you awaken it has fulfilled its purpose when the awakening process begins your past suddenly becomes significant and meaningful and before the awakening process started all that it was was chaos in some cases in other cases it was fine you built up a career and you had a family and you did all the right things and then began to realize that that wasn't it either you succeeded in everywhere and then realized well that's not it what is this all about or you messed up everything possible too and then it's taken you to this point no matter what it is it doesn't matter anymore and retrospectively it's fine now because it's taken you to this point so what before was meaningless suddenly is meaningful and you become thankful for whatever happened because it's taken you to the point where you are ready to awaken or you are already awakening also your life situation does not matter that much whether it is dreadful or has been dreadful whether you have had intense suffering or a moderate amount of suffering or very little suffering it's possible not it's quite rare but possible it doesn't matter as you arrive at this point your sense of who you are is no longer in your personal history and even your present situation I'm not talking about the present moment but your present situation as a life situation does not matter by that I mean the outer circumstances of your life outer circumstances includes the physical body it is the life situation where you live job that you have relationship that you have whether the body is healthy or not all these things

also are secondary because the very purpose of human existence is already happening in you despite in most cases despite your life situation not because of your life situation because almost every life situation seems to be against awakening and it's happening anyway and the strange byproduct of awakening is an improvement in the outer circumstances of your life I only mention that in passing because that is not the main purpose why we are here we are not here to improve the outer circumstances of our lives nor are we here to improve the world those two happen but they are byproducts of awakening we are here to awaken the other thing is the what Jesus called the adding on all those things that you had been seeking will be added on maybe not all because some were pretty silly but some will be added on to you but you don't need them anymore that's a paradox pity isn't it things that before would have been great for your ego now it doesn't mean very much but it's there all the ego would have loved that so some of you are beginning to have a spacious relationship with your thoughts not completely identified not believing in every thought others are already able to choose not to think when they don't want to think without forcing anything just through presence obliterates compulsive thinking presence obliterates dissolves compulsive thinking so you choose presence who is true am I to choose presence presence chooses presence consciousness awakens through the human form and it looks as if somebody were choosing it and that's why I'm saying you can choose it's a perspective no more ultimately it's happening when you think you choose it's happening but for it to happen you have to choose it so the advanced if you're already advanced on the way of no thought then you can do as Nisargadatta Maharaj recommended the spiritual teacher from India who says right meditation which of course is presence right meditation what is it they asked him and he said in his usual forceful way meditation is the radical refusal to harbor thought that would stop your mind a wonderful way of putting it the radical refusal to harbor thoughts I refuse to have thoughts and for a while the addiction to thinking will come creeping back because the compulsion to think is a form of addiction you are addicted to thinking as if it were a drug so you may have some withdrawal symptoms at first but soon you realize that the state of no thinking is infinitely more vitally alive and intelligent and peaceful than thinking could ever be and as it arises more in you that you realize that's your home the home ground and the rest is not really where you belong so to any addict I would always recommend observe the compulsion that comes back wanting don't believe your mind when it says you need to think about this it's important what am I going to do with my life what's going to happen to me am I going to make it you only say my life as long as you're still trapped in thinking when you step out of thinking you don't say my life anymore because then you become life and I'd like to change the American expression get a life I would change that to be life become life be who you are be the life that you are do you remember the spiritual teacher who taught in the tradition of Zen and when people asked him to explain the meaning of Zen all he would ever do is raise his finger and look at you what's the meaning of Zen could be no better explanation than that some people got it most didn't so when he went they looked at him did you hear my question when you observe somebody else immersed in their mind what do you do tell

them I don't think so you would only challenge the ego you're so identified with your mind right now can't you see that me, how dare you say that or do you go no you could try it here I don't know if you would become popular no, the only thing you can do is not do anything but accept allow that moment to be as it is and be the space for that person's mind because that person can't yet be the space for their mind and if you are the space for that person's mind that may help them without feeling that I am helping him or her no but sometimes that that state transmits itself and if you are the space then the possibility arises for that person also to be the space for their mind right and this great wonderful thing you can do in quotation marks because you are not doing anything for in quotation marks other in quotation marks people in quotation marks and it brings about a deepening in you so it's not you are not giving anything that you don't have it's not giving and taking it's being that's called also is an aspect of compassion not that you think of yourself now I am going to be compassionate you can even do it for a group of people who are immersed and identified with their mind so coming back to committee meetings those of you who still go to committee meetings it's only you can bring the change in there if you still choose to go you may not want to go anymore but if you go you can be the space for everybody hold them all in that space of acceptance of what is and presence and you just watch as they the various karmic formations go through their stuff and even when you listen to the news it would be helpful to just be the space for the madness doesn't mean that you go along with it it's just there it is to see it for what it is to see it without even calling it anything just see one last little hint for today when you are in your room tonight or out in nature alone or silently walking with someone or in your room tonight become aware of the stillness just notice it it's there and the moment you become aware of the stillness you become still in other words you're not thinking just noticing the stillness means you stop thinking the moment you start thinking you don't notice the stillness anymore you only have a memory and say oh it's still but you're not noticing it anymore so tuning into stillness is a very quick way of for space consciousness the spacious essential being presence to arise only the stillness in you can be aware of the stillness outside thinking cannot be aware of stillness it doesn't even know it's there only retrospectively after there's been a gap in thinking and you've noticed the stillness the mind will be able to say oh it's very still here but it's not through the mind that you know it and so you do that in nature you do that in your room tonight when it's very still and once you do it through the external stillness you can also once you contact it then you can find even the stillness if there's still some noise and there's still a little bit of stillness in between and you pay attention to that with certain types of music flute perhaps when we listen to the music on Saturday you will be able to do in between the notes there's stillness music consists of of form and formless coming together thank you for a moment I felt that we were in India in a sense we are in India because the geographical east on our planet what we call the east of course once you're there it's not the east but let's just call it the east corresponds to the inner dimension the west is more interested in the outer traditionally things are changing computers are big in India and spirituality is becoming big in the west tomorrow or to use a conventional

term tomorrow as you know it doesn't exist as tomorrow we'll just use the convention of language we start addressing questions questions you may have been told already questions can be spoken or questions can be written and left somewhere questions could also be unspoken inside you where either they dissolve or out of the space an answer comes you can try that too so we have three possibilities and that is for those in whom there are still questions that's fine remember only what we said recently the mind itself will always have one more question and every answer will lead to another question or two and many questions start with yes but in the meantime here and now where I am we continue to open ourselves to the unconditioned space of consciousness within and as I suggested last thing yesterday there are many ways of quite a few ways of accessing the that state of consciousness and one is simply to notice the silence outside and that very moment there's no thinking there's the stillness when you read the Christian scriptures there are some statements that are without any doubt being transmitted without falsification and you can sense the power of those fragments that have come down after the shift of consciousness that happened to the so called person here everything is wrong in language but it doesn't matter couple of years later I was visiting my mother and there was a new testament and I picked it up I hadn't had for many years before then not much relationship with that kind of thing couldn't relate to it I picked it up and I saw one line which said the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed he knows does not come we need to retranslate for modern humans with signs to be observed of course means with signs that you can observe so the kingdom of heaven what's that ancient language kingdom means realm realm means modern time dimension okay so we replace heaven with kingdom with dimension heaven another strange word which in some languages is the same word as the sky German or Spanish maybe also Danish I don't know the word heaven and the word sky are the same word now whether that's a good thing or not I don't know because the first thing for many centuries Christians have looked up into the sky looking for God because of that word and and you see many pictures of saints ancient paintings and the the eyes are always going up because of the word heaven and sometimes they're even pointing upwards it's not really the right direction as if they were pointing at something whereas the formless essence of who you are is not something everything else is something except you who you are in your essence your essence identity is not something and God which is one with your essence identity is not something or some body or some being or some entity it is the formless timeless which can be known but which cannot be known in the same way that you know an object and so Jesus said it cannot is not does not arrive does not come with signs to be observed so he's saying you cannot know it there are no signs it says and then he goes on to say you can't say ah there it is look there it is I'm quoting it's a free translation I'm giving you because I can't memorize scripture he says you can't say oh look there there it is or here it's here that's what he said so he's saying it's not an object that at some point when you are evolved enough will appear in your field of consciousness because the kingdom of heaven is right here in the midst within you in the midst of you within you but then he used the word heaven which in many languages

is the same as sky so on the one hand it led people to look away from themselves although he had said it's within you in another sense the word sky could be quite useful because when you look at the clear sky it is formless it is just space so when you look at the sky you don't get something you get a spaciousness unless it's cloudy and of course that's the same in humans if it's cloudy with thoughts you cannot sense the spaciousness that is beyond the thoughts so if here at the moment it's cloudy some lot of the time so you may not be able to sense the spaciousness because the clouds are something sometimes you can see individual clouds but it's certainly or sometimes they hang together so much that all you see is one big cloud and that's again true for human beings if the density of the mind is extreme it's like carrying inside you one big cloud and that prevents you from sensing what is beyond but what a powerful statement and they read it in church they never really look at it what the depth of it so you have the equivalent of the sky the empty clear sky within and that's the thoughtless realm our destiny is to enter this thoughtless realm and know it consciously we've come from there already everything in nature still inhabits that realm of connectedness with being and you lose the connectedness or seem to lose it and then you regain it at a much deeper level and you know it or rather it knows itself we have suggested here various ways of entering the kingdom of heaven i don't usually use that expression you know you know what it is or rather well you don't know what it is but you have a sense of what it is you can't know it it's not an object it's always been there it's a rediscovery of what you have always been so when i say now kingdom of heaven you realize the reality of that another powerful way of entering it is to contemplate the impermanence of all life forms without judging it to contemplate means to look at it that can begin with seeing a flower that withers or a leaf that falls off the tree or something that i personally enjoy sometimes look at old photos especially group scenes people in the street running about their business taken in nineteen twenty twenty and realize all these people have dissolved and they look so real in the photo or political demonstration around that time and it's all gone but it was so important so important important if you can look at impermanence without shrinking back withdrawing even calling it anything be with it and the space within opens up because when you see how short-lived the form is then and your life but unfortunately your life consists of suffering and unhappiness unless the other dimension is there also in your life so if you just get on with what conventionally is called your life which is an error already because you don't have a life you are not then it's just this conventional existence and it is as the Buddha called it dukkha suffering is the translation or another translation is misery or another translation is unsatisfactoriness and so if you just get on with your life and don't think about death then you always encounter that because your life is not enough if that dimension the transcendental dimension is not in your life your life is a little prison cell even if you live in a palace and even if you have enough money to go anywhere you want to go and do anything you want to do it's a prison cell because you are present within the confines of object consciousness within the confines of your personality the conditioned self within the confines of things both external things and mind things thoughts no space inside you

that is dukkha suffering so all these practical people are not really that practical this is more practical the other conventional practicality is practical unhappiness unhappiness how to be unhappy then just follow the norm of how the world lives this is the recipe for it so conditions in themselves we started the retreat with talking about the conditions that arise and of course you continue to practice with the conditions that arise here conditions in themselves are always sooner or later turn out to be unsatisfactory they can't fulfill you for long situations other people things that you achieve or things or negative conditions certainly then you immediately see the unsatisfactoriness but even in so called positive conditions for a while they're fine and then the positivity of the positive conditions wears off and then the positive condition no longer satisfies the big house that you move into after making it so to speak in the world at first satisfies because you have expanded into it it's my house so it is satisfying to have an expanded ego because you can actually see it you have lots of big rooms not just two or three rooms to walk through now you can walk through 15 rooms and you don't have just three sofas or two or one sofa now you have seven sofas and accumulate other things too that confirm to you that you are somebody you have grown and then at first that is satisfying and then you need to invite people in to confirm because without other people it doesn't work it works for a very short time you can't just sit there after a few days the condition would wear off so you need to invite people and pretend that something important is happening it's a big social event and then they all arrive and admire your place and that gives further nourishment conditions and then the party is over and they go home and then you sit there going okay let's plan another party trying to get as much out of the conditions as you can trying to keep away what deep down you can already sense which is dukkha the unsatisfactoriness that is hiding in every condition don't look at it but then after a few years you get tired even of the parties and dressing up twice a week isn't satisfying anymore either or if it's still satisfying then you have to wait a few more years until the body gets older and when you look in the mirror it doesn't look that great anymore and then dukkha comes as my father who had sometimes a great sense of humor said when he reached the age of 80 mirrors the quality of mirrors seemed to have deteriorated so that any condition you will find sooner or later it comes so now when the physical body begins to deteriorate or get old which it will or is already doing then it gets very hard for those who have been totally identified with the form and dukkha really starts but it's also an opportunity but if it's not too late for you if you've been identified with objects for 70 years then you may be so trapped in object consciousness that all that happens in old age is a hardening of the shell of the egoic self and increasing resistance to what you see as approaching annihilation of me and then you get bitter and a cranky old man or woman leave me alone and your opinions that you've always expressed get very hardened and whatever comes in you already know the answer everything you close down missing the great opportunity that appears even to those who have not been open throughout their lifetime to the transcendental dimension old age is still your chance now before you reach extreme old age i suggest that you become acquainted with impermanence by looking at old photos i also enjoy old

films and then often look in amazement realizing all the people running around famous people sometimes whatever their names are the big stars of the screen they've all dissolved but there are still running around falling in love falling out of love being happy one day unhappy the next and they have like smoke they have dissolved like smoke into where are they now somebody showed me a wonderful tv commercial perhaps the most spiritual one that i've ever seen normally tv commercials are not spiritual because they are about objects that you should be identified with that are going to make you happy but this one was about it may have even have been swedish or scandinavian i'm not sure it was a language i wasn't sure what language there were only two words a few words in it of all things it was an ad for beer but you didn't know that until the very end it starts with it's a kind of cartoon with a lifelike character it starts with a woman pregnant and suddenly she gives birth to a baby this is a cartoonish thing but lifelike the baby doesn't come gently out of her womb it shoots out the baby shoots out into the sky and as it travels upward into the sky it begins to grow when it reaches the highest point the baby is a fully grown man and then the descent starts so it all takes place within 30 seconds the baby comes out and screams then it reaches the high point and then the descent goes and as it goes down you see the man is getting older and older and older and finally hits the ground and goes right in and a gravestone pops up and the whole thing is one scream now you might ask why this is an ad for beer well at the end it says life is short drink such and such if you disregard that advice at the end which is there to desensitize you to the fact that life is short it's a deeply spiritual thing to watch that and i couldn't get enough of it i want to see it again because it shows the reality of human existence and that's also the reason why i greatly enjoy walking going for walks in cemeteries especially old ones where even the name on the gravestones you can't decipher anymore even the name has been borne out so all you have is a gravestone without a name on it and again there's no there's a deep peace when one walks through there because facing impermanence opens up that which is beyond impermanence that in you which recognizes impermanence as impermanence is beyond that it is the timeless consciousness and through the acceptance of the fact of impermanence but you need to see it in front of you not just as an abstract concept in your mind which sometimes if you study Buddhism you say yeah that makes sense Buddha has said life is impermanent that's another thing he said apart from the fact that it's suffering life is impermanent it's true he was right but you haven't really you haven't felt what that means because you have to look at death in the face to sense what that means it only then does something open up within you and it becomes very powerful when you are faced with death either that is coming towards you as impending you know your days may be numbered or your years or your months or your everybody's years are numbered it's not that long that's left or somebody very close to you suddenly dies and then you have to be for this to become a deeply spiritual thing you have to be open also to the initial pain that you feel when your father or your mother or your child or your brother or your sister or your husband or your wife or somebody very close to dies somebody who's been in your life perhaps for long long time and suddenly there's an

emptiness there and yes there will be pain even for those who are deeply connected with the with that which is beyond death within them still silent space within and yet or even even if there are which you should face because it's a condition of this moment that is a very potentially deepening experience where the space the spacious timeless dimension within you can really open up if you do not deny the suffering or the pain that you feel so you look death straight in the face and then you learn the reality of impermanence with every cell of your body it's not enough to know impermanence with the head and you really when you really really I experienced a great depth when I my parents passed away last year both of them within the space of four months each other or they didn't even live together and the moment the deepest moment when I saw how the nothingness when I felt with every cell of my being the nothingness of what the world calls important you have to feel the world calls important that it is ultimately nothing and the whole identification to form with form is ultimately nothing and I I had always known that I had always known that I had always known that I had always that I always known that I had always known that I had always known that I had that had that I had always known that I had always known known that known that I had always known that I had always known that I had to your ego, nothing personal. And it all comes to that sound.

It dissolves in that moment, what's the final pronouncement on identification with form, the final pronouncement on what is the real significance of this. And I cried, although I know all this. But it was still, and underneath the crying, that the peace was deep and wonderful.

So it's only in the face of death, because death is when the fabric of our existence comes apart, a hole. And even not just your own death, but a death of somebody very close to you, there's suddenly a hole. If you imagine your existence, your life as a fabric, I mean the life of forms as a fabric, and suddenly it tears apart.

There's a big tear and a hole appears. And it goes. A little bit of your life is lost, because people, when they say of my life, they incorporate into my life, of course, the people close to them.

They're part of what people call my life. Somebody close to you dies, and suddenly something in this fabric of my life is missing. And so a hole appears.

And to the object-identified, form-identified consciousness, that is extremely painful. And in many cases, it doesn't even want to look at that hole that has just appeared. In some cases, strangely enough, the ego gets angry when somebody close dies.

I've seen several cases of people getting angry when somebody close to them dies. That's very strange, isn't it? But it is normal in many cases.

It is a denial, a rejection. It's a defense mechanism of the ego. Through anger, you don't

see the hole.

You cover it up with your anger. Then perhaps after the anger, people who work with that, they say that mourning has stages. I can't remember what they are, but that's how, ideally, you should come to acceptance eventually.

But some people never really face it. If you can look at that hole, then you realize this really what has appeared in your life, the so-called my life, is a space where before there was somebody that filled or occupied that space in the fabric of my life, suddenly there is an empty space. And to the object consciousness, empty space is highly undesirable and painful.

It doesn't want to see it. It is afraid of that dimension because deep down it realizes that that dimension, if it comes into your life, will invalidate all the things that it considers important, that it considers absolutely important. But if you can be with the empty space that is left, and what I'm saying now is not something abstract.

Each one of you has already experienced this. And if you haven't experienced it, it won't be long before you experience this. There is suddenly the space, the hole.

And if you really look at that, you look death in the face. The form is dissolving, leaves a nothingness, no thingness. And through that empty space suddenly comes the formless because it is the formless shining through.

And in the state of deep acceptance of impermanence, that transcendent space is suddenly there. You realize it within yourself. And that is the grace that is hiding behind what we call dreadful, the death of form.

So not to run away from it, resist it. And even sometimes remember that it will come to you too. Often people who are weeping and crying when they go to a funeral, as if something totally out of the ordinary and incomprehensible had just happened.

Some of them themselves are close to death. They may be in their eighties, but they still don't seem to realize very soon I'll be there too. Well, the physical form coming to terms with that as soon as possible in your life.

So death is also a point of access into the formless. Within you, if it is not resisted. There are other forms of death that are also very helpful.

They're not necessarily the physical death in your life, but great loss or disaster in your life. And some of you would not be here if great loss or disaster had not happened in your life. The deepening then that has brought you here and the deepening that enables you to recognize the truth of this would not have happened.

And you know that these words are true. You would not be here if those dreadful things

or that one dreadful thing had not happened to you. And there again, there are many kinds of deaths in one's life.

When the form becomes threatened or some form that was important to you dissolves. It could be your possessions. It could be your position in society.

You lose your, everybody thought you were great and suddenly something happens. Maybe you did something silly or people say you did and you lose your reputation and everything crumbles. But what crumbles?

Only the mind made self, a little death. Or somebody, your child died. Or you did something in a state of unconsciousness that the world calls dreadful.

Or a disability in your life. One thing that has afflicted your life from the beginning that would conventionally be called the worst thing that could happen to a person. And there comes a point when you realize the worst thing that happened to you was the best thing that ever could have happened.

Because through that, it forced you into a disidentification from form. You had to, because if you continue to be identified with the dissolving forms or the deeply unsatisfying forms, you would continue to suffer dreadfully. So this disaster of whatever kind potentially can force you out of identification with form.

Perhaps half the people here or more have experienced disaster of one kind or another and it forced you out of that. And others have experienced a series of smaller disasters called normal existence. I like to quote Churchill here.

What he said was about human history, but he could have said the same about a normal human life. And he described it as one damn thing after another. One damn thing after another.

Life does not leave you alone. And so the amazing thing is you start being grateful even for, or particularly for the so-called bad things. Because you now realize what the mind called bad is not bad.

The mind, the egoic mind does not know what is good for you. What it thinks is good for you is bad and what it thinks is bad is good. I have seen people, for example, just taking one example, suffering physical disability so that you have to be in a wheelchair.

And I've seen people in wheelchairs. I've met people in wheelchairs that looked angry and bitter at the world and what had happened to them and envious of every person who could still walk. He's walking, he's dreadful.

Why is he walking and not me? All the mind's story stuff was going, and this is the mechanism of unhappiness, telling yourself stories and being angry with God, with life,

with other people, feeling the victim of whatever the mind invents, the victim of circumstances, life, God, fate. So to be a victim, you need to tell yourself the story of victim.

Otherwise you can't be a victim. So you need to tell that. And the more you tell yourself the story, the unfair, unjust fate that has afflicted you, and you don't have to be in a wheelchair to tell yourself such a story.

The unjust fate that has afflicted you. And of course, the telling and retelling of that story, of the unjust fate that has afflicted you creates emotions. The body reacts with certain emotions that correspond to those thoughts, because the body believes that what you are thinking is reality.

So the body thinks you're being tortured at this very moment. You are being the true victim at this very moment, and you're being tortured. It doesn't realize the only torture is the torture of your own mind.

It takes the thoughts to be a reality. The emotion then you experience is deeply negative. Whatever it is, anger, hatred, bitterness, and so on.

Despondency. So I've seen people in wheelchairs who were in that state. I describe, I believe I describe one in a new earth, who was a person who was deeply angry when I was visiting a restaurant.

And then I have seen people in wheelchairs who looked, I just glanced at them, and immediately I said, I looked at them again, and the eyes were clear. The victim had dissolved. They were not telling themselves the story of poor me anymore.

They had come to a point of surrender, of acceptance. And what happens in surrender is that you don't tell yourself stories anymore about me and my life. Almost all stories that you tell yourself have some element of victim in them.

Even on a relatively superficial level, what somebody said about me to somebody else, or my parents, or this and that. It's always, you're always right and somebody's wrong. This is a very common element in the storytelling in the head in most people.

I'll come to a minute to a slightly different example. You're always telling somebody's right, you're always reaffirming your rightness. And so when there's already the touch of being a victim of others who are wrong and are doing something to you that's wrong.

The reversal can also happen. You can tell yourself a story where you are always wrong and everybody else is right. And that's another form of ego.

It says, I can never do anything right. Whatever I do is wrong. And everybody's know so much more than I and they're all so much better, I can't do anything.

I'm no good at anything. Another story. And it could have started with such a simple thing as your mother, deeply unconscious too, was already telling you when you were three and you knocked over a glass.

You said, oh, you were no good at anything. You can't even keep the glass on the table. And this is how unconsciousness breeds unconsciousness.

So the afflicted person in the wheelchair who was free of the victim story, you can see some space consciousness had opened up because they had let go of identifying with object consciousness, with thoughts about me and my life. They had come to some point of surrender. And that's the case also with old people.

You get, when you get there, basically there are two kinds of old people. I briefly mentioned it before. The cranky old and the peaceful old.

It's a generalization. Some people have elements of both. The cranky old remain trapped.

The peaceful old, a light begins to shine through. They no longer believe that anything that happens is that important anymore. And so they become representatives of the unconditioned and it begins to open up in them.

They die before they die. The ego personality dissolves, maybe just a few months or a few years before they die, maybe just a few weeks before they die. Something in them that before was hanging on to the things of this world, thinking things were important, something dissolves and something makes room for space.

And then there's the dissolving form and there's the light and emanation shining through. And that is the fulfillment that to some people comes at a very late stage. And it is coming here already without the need for the body to grow old.

That's the beautiful thing. You see, you are dying already to the illusion of the self, the object self, the mind made self. Some people need more time and they may not die until it's very, they're very close to the end.

Or some people who have already been deeply engaged in spiritual transformation, then in some cases the final step happens as the body begins, gets ready to dissolve. And then suddenly the final breakthrough comes into complete presence. And that's the flowering of consciousness, self-realization, realizing who you are beyond form.

But to us here, it's coming already without having to wait for death to come. So in a way we are experiencing a kind of death here, but it's not all that painful. You have already experienced several kinds of small deaths and that's why you're here.

And now, and those were involuntary. They were initially involuntary, inflicted upon you

by some malignant power with the ego thought. And now comes the voluntary surrender of identification with the egoic personality and all the things that make up the object consciousness.

So this is a wonderful thing. People who voluntarily embrace that. And that's the meaning of the old saying.

I don't remember what tradition it comes from. It may be Sufism. Find death before death finds you because death is going to find you.

But if you find death before death finds you, that is a miraculous thing. And that is the fulfillment of the purpose of human existence. And when you find death in that way, you realize that it's not ultimately real.

There is no death. Only the form dissolves. And that's why Buddhism has a beautiful expression when it talks about this, the deathless realm that you find within you, the deathless realm.

Amara. Mara would be death. Amara is deathless, the deathless realm within you.

We emphasized in the previous session the importance of going beyond thinking. Now, when you relinquish thought, when it's not needed, and simply remain alert and present and here as spacious consciousness, that also is a kind of death. It's relinquishing the unconscious need to assert your form existence through continuous thinking.

It is through continuous thinking, which in almost everybody has become compulsive, even addictive. It is through continuous thinking that you continuously assert the absolute reality of your form identity, because you're identified with every thought that comes in. Every thought is a thought form.

And you find the me in there, an I, because you become one with the thought. So hence the compulsion to think, to keep yourself going, the object self, the mind object self. And the mind is afraid, of course, of letting go.

It cannot even recognize that which is beyond the mind. So whenever you relinquish thought, you embrace death in a deeper sense. You die to the defined sense of self.

You die to the definition of me, which before you needed to hang onto because I need to remind myself who I am and I need to tell myself the story of me. And it keeps you going. Plus the emotions that go with it.

So when you stop thinking, you let go also of the defined self. You don't define yourself through thought anymore. That's gone.

And that's the kind of death because what is left when you don't define yourself through thought anymore? What's left when the reactive patterns begin to dissolve? I remember

working with a woman who was complaining about her husband all the time.

She was in her late 60s or early 70s. And she was in continuous state of resistance and anger and irritation because she couldn't stand her husband anymore. This had been going on for 25 or 30 years.

Everything disgusted her about her husband. His very presence, his breathing, everything, his eating, his coughing, everything disgusted her. And so she was in continuous state of contraction and he was telling me the story of how dreadful he was.

Then I pointed out to her that these were thought patterns and reactive patterns. And it was possible for her to relinquish these and then see how she feels. If she doesn't tell herself stories and she observes the reactive patterns as they arise in her.

And there was a moment of awakening and she looked in puzzlement. And then the mind came back and she said, almost shouting, but if I let go of that, what have I got left? And that was a big teaching for me because I realized now I learned so much from observing the ego.

What have I got left? So there was such attachment to the reactive pattern and to the story. And she realized that her whole sense of self was already, was in that.

She was this complaining entity. She had become a continuously irritated and complaining person. And the irritation and the complaining had become part of her identity.

And the miracle was that the mind could see that and then said, what have I got left? If I can't complain anymore, it's the last, it's the only thing I have. Now in her that had become conscious, in most people that is an unconscious resistance to letting go, to dying, to the me.

Dying to the me in the head. Now, the mechanism of this is the same in everybody. It may not be quite as extreme in you, certainly not in you because you're.

Although the laughter seems to indicate that you recognize it. Laughing at human unconsciousness, especially your own, of course, is a form of liberation too. Because when you see it in front of you, when you really see it, you have to laugh or you could weep or both at the same time.

So there's something in you to have still also that does not want to go, that may still be occasionally here and there from time to time, an attachment to old reactive patterns, an attachment to my story, my interpretation of my life. And it comes back. It doesn't want to go.

It has a momentum behind it, an energy. It is an energy form. Everything is energy.

And so the mind made self is also an energy form. And every energy form wants to remain in existence. It doesn't want its own end.

And you cannot fight it. You cannot fight identification with the mind. The moment you fight it, you create more of it.

And it's only through knowing it that you can go beyond. Knowing it means being the space for that. Being the space for that implies accepting what arises.

But to know a thought that arises, there needs to be a gap. And here's the awareness and there's the thought. And sometimes the gap, as we pointed out, disappears.

You become the thought that can happen to you, even to you still sometimes. You become the thought. And then usually a great, a good sign that identification is back is some form of suffering will follow soon after that.

When you have to be back in identification with a thought. Some form of suffering, it may be a small or more significant form of suffering will come. It could be an irritation, which is a small form of suffering.

It could be stress. It could be restlessness. It could be boredom.

It could be anxiety. It comes. And when you notice, again, it'd be easier.

There's more conscience. You can notice that you're in a state of suffering or unhappiness. And when you notice it, there's unhappiness in me in one form or another, then you know also immediately, okay, I was identified.

The noticing means you already, for a moment you're out because it's only for being out, you notice it. There's a little bit of awareness that has come in and you notice you're in a state of suffering. Not extreme necessarily, but suffering.

You notice, you notice it. And that is often used that as an awakener whenever you feel you're being taken over by something that is not aligned with now means. Suffering means you've become identified with some kind of mind form or reactive pattern.

It also means that you've lost the present moment. And that is very helpful when dysfunctional states come back into you. The moment you notice it, you also know that you have lost they are there because you have lost the present moment.

You have not opened yourself up to what is. And when you've lost, you notice you've lost the present moment. I'm unhappy, I must have lost the present moment.

Okay, it always applies. Now the mind will try to prolong that state and tell you that you can't possibly get back into the present moment right now. That's very common thing the mind will do.

So when you notice it, there is a spark of awareness because it's only from that spark of awareness that you can notice that you're in a dysfunctional state. And immediately the spark of awareness will be used or misused by the mind, which will then say, okay, you've lost the present moment, but there's no way you can get back into it now. There's just too much going on in my life now.

I've got just really, I've got far more serious things to deal with than the present moment. And that is functional to stay very close and related with that is when something that happens in your, it arises in your life situation, and you believe it, you give it so much importance that everything else disappears. It could be insignificant thing, a bill that is wrong, whatever, some paper arrives and they've made a mistake there or whatever, and you go in, what's this?

And you go, this shouldn't have happened. Now, to the mind, this is a normal and good way of dealing with things. It doesn't realize that that is a dysfunctional state.

Something that is, if anything of very relative importance pretends to be absolutely important and you treat it as if it were absolutely important, you lose yourself in it completely. You lose yourself in the reaction towards it and in the mind stream, and you start talking, you can't stop talking about it and thinking about it. And then you call up a friend, you know what happened?

This thing went wrong, I. You can recognize another way of calling that is complete loss of inner space. It's completely gone.

All you are is just crammed full with thought. So the, and I'm mentioning it because it will make it easier for you perhaps to recognize it when it happens again. And you don't realize any situation you deal with it with so much greater, more effectiveness if, yes, you may have to apply your thought.

There's something wrong with this bill. They've overcharged me by \$25,000. But instead of going into, you say, okay, we have to take some action here.

The question is, is there even then, this is relatively important, but not absolutely important. Nothing in this, the world of form is absolutely important. What is absolutely important, whether there's still some space in you and you can sense that.

As you deal with a situation, is there still in the background, a sense of spaciousness, even while you pick up the phone and says, you need to look into this, you've overcharged me by \$25,000. And then they say, okay, I'll see if I can find my superior. And then there's a pause.

And then you go into not thinking. Then there's, if you can. When we use the word detachment, what it really implies, detachment means there is some space still somewhere.

There's some detachment from the situation. Detachment means here's the situation and here's the consciousness and there's a space. A little bit, any situation that you deal with, the vital question is, is there still some detachment there in me, some space?

Even while I take action, is there some space? Otherwise you lose yourself in the action, in the thought stream, in the reaction. And then you get a counter reaction.

And so you get totally lost in the world because you believe that the world is absolutely important. And of course, it's always easier to see it when it happens to somebody else. You say, oh, there it is.

That's what he was talking about. And you don't have to wait for long. If you live with people, just a little bit, something will happen and they will go through this motion.

You can see it most clearly in people who are still a lot of the time, perhaps already present. And there you can see the contrast most clearly. People who even in the good times are completely identified with the mind.

And even when they're out on top of a mountain, they're still identified with their thoughts. There you can't see the contrast so clearly when they go into reactive mode. And because that's their normal modality is being identified with optic consciousness.

But people who are already transitional beings, there you can see it much more clearly, the enormous shift from being present and suddenly a trigger comes, something happens. And the whole, the energy field completely changes. It's like you had a clear sky, and within five seconds, enormous clouds come in and cover the whole sky.

So there's a learning, you can see it in others around you, and then perhaps even detect it in yourself if it still happens. If it's happening to somebody close to you, you cannot at that moment say, let me tell you what's happening to you now, because there's nobody there to listen. You would be addressing the egoic consciousness.

And that won't hear what you have to say, it can't. It doesn't even, it's totally meaningless when you address the ego about the ego. It's absolutely meaningless to the ego.

And you will get some answer back that will tell you as much that what you're saying is complete rubbish. And to the ego, it is. It's incomprehensible nonsense.

This is serious, what I'm dealing with right now. This is serious, don't come with that nonsense now. Self-observation, vital.

But now there's growing presence in you, so it'll be easier to be there as the witness when certain states come into you. Presence, embrace presence when there's relatively no challenge, little challenge in your life, and then wait for the next thing. Then use

presence in the small challenges that come.

And then some people actually go the other way when something really drastically bad happens, they are present, perhaps more present than before. But when all the little things go wrong in their lives which make up normal existence, they lose it all the time. So this is another pattern that can be fairly common.

When something drastic goes wrong, you say, what does it matter? It's fine, we'll do this, see if we can remedy it. The house has collapsed, let's make a phone call.

Call the insurance company, we'll talk to them. Meantime, we'll go into the hotel. There it is, it's not the end of the world.

The Dukkha talked about impermanence, and there it is. So they are able to transcend big conditions that are so-called bad. And yet, when something little goes wrong, why didn't you take the garbage out last night?

Was your turn to take the garbage out? It's over, I'm always the one who's taking the garbage out. Normal in a married relationship.

Or then you're stuck in a traffic jam. For God's sake, why isn't the traffic moving? I need to be there in 10 minutes.

It'll take at least a half an hour now to get the body contracts. Come on, come on. They lose it in the little things, and in the big things, they have it.

That's also fairly common. Or the reverse, with the little things you're okay, but when something really bad happens, somebody close to you falls ill, whatever, then you lose it. So it depends, it varies from person to person where you lose presence.

But the good thing is that life will challenge you with a big thing or a small thing. And the small things, of course, are virtually continuous. Even in such a wonderful place as here, the small things will challenge you always.

Any trip you take, any trip, you'll probably get some challenge on going to the airport, at the airport, on the plane, or whatever it may be. Little things can all be transformed into spiritual practice. You are no longer then at the mercy of conditions.

Your inner state is not determined by conditions. And then comes the practice with people, the hardest practice. Somebody's angry, are you going to be angry back?

That's the reactive pattern. Then can you remain present and spacious in the face of anger? That's quite a big challenge.

You need to really be there and allow this moment to be as it is in the form of an angry person. Otherwise, you're pulled into unconsciousness. And that can happen easily that

an unconscious person will pull you into a reaction.

So when faced with a person that is in a negative, dysfunctional state, especially if it's directed towards you, blaming you, accusing you, calling you this or that, whatever it may be, you should have, why didn't you? So you fail to then to be not to immediately, not to go into reaction or automatically defend yourself. Remaining spacious in the face of an unconscious person.

It can happen. One unconscious person, if there is a group of people, one unconscious person can pull the whole group into unconsciousness. One negative person can pull a whole group into unconsciousness.

Even in the collective, one group of unconscious people can pull a whole nation into unconsciousness. And then it, so that means you're being pulled to the same level as the triggering group or event such as probably was the case with terrorists and the American administration's reaction to terrorism. One unconsciousness pulling you into unconscious reactivity.

And that happens on a personal level also. And it happens on the collective. So something going wrong, to use a wider term, which applies, can apply to people in your life, situations in your life that should not be happening according to the mind.

Something going wrong, there's always the two possibilities. Either it pulls you into, makes you more unconscious or it makes you more conscious. You can go either way when things happen in your life, things that shouldn't be happening according to the mind.

And so when you're attached to the thought, it shouldn't be happening, the normal automatic thought, you're already on your way into unconsciousness. When you identify with the thought and this shouldn't be happening, but it's happening, you're going towards unconsciousness. Or you can use things that don't go, that are going wrong in your life as awakeners.

So every time a little or big challenge comes, it makes you more present. And a little challenge makes you a little bit more present. And a big challenge, it makes you much more present.

So in a, and that's a function of challenges in life. So a little thing goes wrong, you miss the plane. And so you go, oh.

Or you're on the plane and it looks as if it's going to crash and then you go. No thought, absolute presence. Could happen and it could awaken you forever.

However long ever is. So that brings us to the statement that we started the retreat with, which is conditions are not here to satisfy you, but to wake you up. They are here to

awaken, not to make you happy.

And then comes something that is even deeper than happiness. It's a continuous background of peace. A writer once expressed that in a book.

That's the best beginning of any book I've ever read. It is so good, the first two sentences, that I never read the rest of the book. The book is called *The Road Less Traveled*.

And the beginning of the book is something like life is hard or life is difficult, and that's a fact. But when you know that life is difficult, it's no longer difficult. When you really know it, he's really talking about conditions.

When you know and accept that life is difficult, it's not difficult anymore. It's the beginning of the book, because it's only the saying that this shouldn't be, things should always be as I want them to be. Then you don't know that conditions are not here to make you happy.

But when you know that conditions are not here to make you happy, and because they can't, then conditions are no longer considered as obstacles on your path, your life path, because that's how most people live. They think the conditions that arise are blocking them one after another. And then you come to regard the present moment itself as an obstacle.

I want to get there, but I'm stuck here. Life is putting obstacles in my path, but every obstacle is a hidden door into yourself. As long as you think it's an obstacle, it's not.

But when you know that, every obstacle can become the doorway. And the bigger, the bigger the door. Thank you.

Just ask yourself, am I here now? Just to make sure you never know. The question should lead your attention deeper within so that you feel your presence or the presence subtle.

Now, even that's not quite correct, because when you feel the presence, you don't feel the presence. The presence is the presence that feels its own presence. There's no longer, as you move deeper within, there's the division disappears that is characteristic of the ego state of having a mind made self that you relate to an image, a division, me and myself.

So as you go deeper, there's only what remains is a sense of conscious presence, very subtle, can't be grasped, even remembered. It underlies whatever happens in your life, whatever thoughts arise, whatever emotions arise, they all arise out of that. Forms come out of the formless, and yet in their essence, still are the formless.

And that is the present moment, the now. So another way of putting it is to say, you're

aware of the now as yourself, the formless self. So another way of putting it then to put the two together, the secret of life then for us humans is to be aware not only of what happens in the now, everybody's aware of that, in fact, drawn into that, reacting to that, identified with that, not only be aware of that, which is normal, not only be aware of what happens in the now, what arises in the now, but also of the now prior to what arises in it. Then you have the two dimensions, form and formlessness.

And then the forms are not as rigid or impenetrable or heavy or serious as they are in the now. When you are unaware completely of the formless dimension within yourself, of the now as the space, when you're unaware of that, the world of form is, every form is a heaviness and is dense and impenetrable and somehow threatening or there's a neediness. A form either is against you or you think you need that form, identification and reaction.

When the other dimension is present, visually you still see this more or less the same thing. But the way in which you experience the world or the things of the world changes. There's a certain lightness and the heaviness is gone and the things become almost transparent.

You sense the aliveness that is hiding in the form, which before you didn't know in other humans, in yourself, of course, primarily, in other humans and in all other forms. Even if you look at a rock, there's a hint of presence hiding in the rock, in every form, not only the forms that we call alive because ultimately everything is alive. And the essence of the rock also is formlessness.

Even physicists, scientists are beginning to get there because the deeper you penetrate into the form of the rock, the more space you find. And when you go very deep, the physicist discovers the rock is virtually almost 100% space. And the rest, they don't know exactly what it is.

Even that is not something. So that's the recognition of the formless in yourself, in all other forms. So in that sense, the forms become somewhat transparent, not visually transparent, but to your inner perception.

That enhances the aliveness and the beauty of the forms. The beauty is then, because the beauty really, deep down, what beauty means, it's not the external. It's something shining through the form.

Now with a flower, one can see it more easily. Even if you are relatively, mind, form identified, you will perhaps for a second, see beauty in a flower. And then immediately the mind gives it form and says, that's beautiful.

What a pretty flower. Of course, then you don't see it anymore. But with a rock, you don't see it immediately.

You need to have, be in touch with the inner space to see the beauty in the rock and to see the beauty everywhere. Meaning the formless, the timeless, the essence shining through. In some Buddhist traditions, they call that Buddha nature.

Everything they say has Buddha nature. That's another way of putting it. Does the cow have Buddha nature?

The master was asked, and the answer was, no. By using that as the answer, the master removed the concept of cow and encouraged you to look directly without concepts. Then it's easier for, when you let go of the mental form projecting onto the physical form, it's easier for the formless to come through, to sense that.

This arises in this moment, the so-called tea. It's a teaching, and it's entirely new. I have that strange feeling that I've never said anything like this before.

And yet I'm sure your mind knows that it has been said before, but it's always so fresh and new when it's said, because listening to it is the realization of it. And if you're able to be there, still enough and listen. Let's look at some questions.

Britain. In Copenhagen, you said, the next moment will not be better than this moment. My reaction.

So why am I sitting here then? Very good point. Because of course I came in hope to become wiser, so my life will improve.

And you write about improvements that will happen when a person stops identifying with thoughts, stops living in the future. So for me, there's a paradox here I can't solve, and I'm looking forward to your answer. Well, the paradox is not only there for you, but for me too, it's a paradox.

Another example to prove that the mind might think that the next moment can be better. The weather has improved today, it seems. Okay, so yesterday it wasn't as good, it was colder and cloudy, and now it's imposed so the next moment can be better.

When I say the next moment is not going to be better than the next one, first of all, we are addressing a deep seated, unconscious, collective mind pattern that believes unconsciously that the next moment is always going to be better. That's not entirely true perhaps either, because sometimes it fears that the next moment might be worse. But in either case, it always projects forward to the next moment and believes it is more important, even if it's worse.

The fear that you feel is there when you project yourself mentally into an uncertain future situation. The fear that you feel is there because you believe that future moment, the next or the one after that, to be so important that it obliterates this moment where there's nothing to fear. So there's the mental projection to the next one where it says

something might go wrong, happen to me, I might lose this or that.

And then fear arises. And again, based on the unconscious assumption that the next moment is more important than this one, it's always considered so important that you're already reacting as if it were happening and you're ignoring the present moment where there is no fear, nothing to fear. So whether you think the next moment is better or worse, you're living for the next moment.

That's the mind pattern. And of course, on the surface, the next moment sometimes is better when it comes as the now. And then you compare it to a minute ago, a minute ago, I was, can't think of anything, cold.

I was cold and hungry. And then suddenly somebody gives me a warm coat and a piece of bread. And suddenly I feel, oh, this moment is actually better than the last one could happen.

On the surface, there's continuous change. To understand what this moment means, you have to go deeper beyond the surface appearance of this moment into the space of this moment. And really that's what it's all about.

If you go deep enough into the space of this moment, that's how we started again today, the space, going deeper into the space of now, then the external appearance of now, the condition of now is of less importance. It is only of relative importance. And that is going beyond this deep seated mind pattern that believes the next moment is, if not better, more important than this moment.

That is a mind pattern. So you are learning, we are learning to go deeper into this moment where there is a deep sense of peace and aliveness that has nothing to do with conditions. And that's the depth of this moment.

Now, that is the depth of where there is the formless life in the world of form, time also applies. Time and form go together. So when you bring the two together, you use language, which is derived, of course, from the world of form, is itself form, comes from thought, is itself form, and then you talk about the formless, immediately you get into some kind of paradox because the formless is the timeless dimension.

Form is time and you have a body and you move in this world of form always. So even for me to say there is only, in essence, only one moment ever already, six seconds have passed while I made that statement in the world of form. So on that level, you cannot deny on this level here that there is such a thing as time or there seems to be.

I can only really say there seems to be such a thing as time because things change. You can say if you wait a few more days, the flowers will wilt. If you wait a few more years, these bodies will wilt.

And wherever you look, there's time. We talked about impermanence that is everywhere in the world of form. That is, one could say, one could put it like this, time is consuming every form.

It's the poetic way of putting it or burning up. Time is burning up every form, consuming. Like a, it pulls you and you can't get out of that pull on the level of form, you can't.

But the strange thing is, all you can ever know for certain experience, tangible reality, it's always now. So on the one hand, time seems to consume every form, including yourself. And yet, whenever you are here, it's always now.

So time can be compared to a criminal who leaves behind dead bodies, but you can never catch the criminal, only the evidence. But it's all indirect evidence. You never have it, ah, there it is.

So that's the paradox of time. You can never experience time, you can only ever experience the present moment, now. It's always now, your life is always now, so there's no time.

And yet, when you look in the mirror in the morning, and then you hold up a photo of yourself 25 years ago, you see a difference. Time did that to you, but the criminal can't be caught. So perhaps here's an idea for those of you who are writers of fiction for some kind of novel on the criminal called time, can never be caught.

So because of that, some kind of paradox remains when you talk about time, and that does not disappear until you go within and realize it's always now, and actually sense the underlying now as yourself, which is always there, no matter whether the body's getting old or not, it's there. And, well, as we mentioned already, the contemplation of what time does to the world of form, that in itself can take you deeper if you contemplate it without judging it in any way. That's the contemplation of impermanence.

Impermanence means what time does to things. Yes. In that sense, time is very helpful if you use it in such a way, can take you beyond time.

Do you believe that enlightened people reincarnate in some future moment, presumably, they reincarnate? The Zen master was asked what happens after a death, and he said, I don't know. Why should I know?

He said, both, you're the master. He said, but I'm not a dead one. Perhaps we can slightly modify this question and make it more vital.

I'll transform the question into what is reincarnation and do I reincarnate? What does it mean to say I reincarnate? What is all that?

Reincarnation can only be understood now. It's not as a belief, but as an actual

experience. Reincarnate, to incarnate means to go into form, to be born into a form.

And every time you identify with a thought that arises, or a condition, external condition that you want or reject, and you are identified with the reaction of desire or fear, or an emotion arises and it takes you over, train of thought takes you over, you are born into a form. Your sense of timeless being is lost and you become a limited form. So in essence, reincarnation means birth into form and loss of consciousness, identification with form.

So every time you lose presence, or presence, you can't lose it as such, but presence becomes obscured. You lose yourself in some form and that is the continuous rebirth into form. And what we are engaged in here is awakening and awakening means realizing who you are beyond form through stillness, presence.

The unconditioned space, knowing yourself as that. Then you stop reincarnating. Everything else is the dream of form.

So you get lost in, again, in the dream, with whatever it is. So you can experience every day, you can probably many times experience reincarnation. And some people are reincarnated permanently in, well, not permanently, but for a long time in the personality form with all its conditioning.

And there's never any space that is unconditioned. They are forced to act out script, their conditioned mind, emotional, mental entity is acting out whatever the conditioning is. It's like a script, they're actors, and they don't know it, acting out the conditioned script of their minds.

They are totally incarnated. There is no space where they are free of that identification. And for us here, we are stepping out of this compulsion, the dream of form, the continuous reincarnation into form.

That's what it is. If you want to extrapolate from there, I'll leave that alone. After you leave the body, the desire to reincarnate might survive.

And where's the next form I can be born into? No. The pull into form.

There's also the pull, part of that is the pull for sensory experience. Some people have that very strong. Another one is the pull, the addiction to thinking.

It's the addiction to sensory experience, which is another version of incarnating into the form of that experience. I need something. Where's the next sandwich?

Chocolate cake. I need to experience in this new form. It will fulfill me.

The next chocolate cake will fulfill me. Reincarnation into a chocolate cake. Chocolate cake came to mind because we had one yesterday.

One brief, another brief addition to this, another very common way of incarnating is when people talk to each other and a mind stream arises and it pulls you along. The conversation, one thing leads to another and another and another and you're in the mind stream and not again, loss of space to, and then the other mind reinforcing the mind stream. So you're being carried along and it could get on for an hour.

They never stopped talking. It's very easy. The moment you start to speak that the energy of words, thoughts and words takes you over and you're completely in that stream and you're lost again.

There's no space. We've all experienced that. If not in ourselves, you've seen others do it.

You all know the situation where you want to say, I need to go now, but you can't because they don't stop talking. You're waiting for a gap, but it doesn't arise. And sometimes all you can do is you have to just get up and say, okay, I have to go now.

So watch one to be aware of one's own mind stream as you talk is already being free. If you're aware of it, you're not totally incarnated. There is some freedom there.

And then you can carry on a conversation without getting lost in the conversation. And particularly powerful, it becomes when their opinions are being expressed that you identify with. The Buddha talked about the thicket of opinions.

Can't get through heavy stuff. So people are incarnated into their favorites, their pet opinions. And just if somebody touches that, where there's a sensitive spot in you, we are very much identified with an opinion that brings up, let me tell you what this is really about.

Incarnated into this energy field. How do you explain Diksha, Diksha? It's an Indian word, I believe.

And it's to do with transmission of energy, which happens all the time, of course, on different levels. And I believe also in India, it's recognized that we can be many kinds of Diksha for healing, for other purposes, for realization. Different vibrational frequency of energy that is transmitted from one person to another.

On the most fundamental level, Diksha is if I give you an apple or a piece of bread, because there's energy in it. Just on the physical, there's energy. You eat it and then you get energy.

Okay. And then you have another level of less tangible frequency of energy, where I talk to you or I give you attention. And that happens very frequently.

It is always an energy exchange when people talk. And we perhaps all have met people

who love to talk about their problems to you, kind of trying to draw you in, expecting some kind of solution from you. And you, you're doing your best to find some kind of solution to this person's problem.

And say, well, why don't you, you could do that. Why don't you change your life and do that? And they say, oh, yeah, that may be a good idea.

And you talk for an hour. And after the hour, you feel depleted. The other person feels much better.

And you feel, oh, but hopefully you've, at least you've helped the other person. And then they come back two weeks later and nothing has happened. So they get addicted.

Some people are addicted to energy, mental energy coming from others. They don't want to change in their life. They want to, it's unconscious, of course.

They want you to listen to their problems and give them attention. So it's, there can be an energy transfer on that level. A child is vital to give attention to a child.

And that could mean just talking to a child or looking at a child is a form of attention. It's as vital to a little child, almost as vital as food to be given attention. It's, there is an energy flow.

So the energy can come from different levels of yourself. It can be mind energy and it can come from a deeper level. In this situation here, there's also an energy flow.

That's a very fine energy. This, it comes directly out of stillness. It is still, it has no form.

It is formless. Source energy, and that can activate that very same dimension in you. And that's what it does.

And that's Diksha. It activates the same frequency in you. And this is the formless source, the unmanifested.

Now we can almost say, but is that possible? How can the unmanifested come into this world? Does it not become manifested?

And then it's no longer the unmanifested. But that's philosophy. All we know here is this is what happens.

So it activates that in you, or in many cases, that dimension in you, so to speak, has already been activated. And that's the very reason why you're here. So what, all that happens here is a deepening.

And that's why it's very pleasant to be here. The energy of presence deepens. Now, in between the unconditioned and the physical and then the mental, there are other energy

frequencies.

There's a big range of energy that is also not physical. The energy that animates the body, chi, shakti, whatever. And that's halfway between the formless and the world of form.

It's the bridge between the formless and the world of form. And some people have access to that level of energy. And even that bridge between the forms and the form can be closer to form, and it can be closer to the formless.

Even that chi can come in different frequencies. Now, sometimes chi also comes together with the source energy, or may also have an element of chi in it. So there is the source frequency.

And as it comes into this world, there's also elements of the other frequency. And that can be even up to the physical. So as you sit here, some people have physical symptoms in their body.

It could be an intense aliveness, or it could be the removal of certain blockages in the physical system that happen even as they sit here. And that could be experienced as temporary pain or pressure. So the source energy can also activate as it comes in other frequencies at the same time.

Doesn't always do it, but it can. And there are other situations where the main energy that's being transmitted is chi, is called chi. And that you don't have to be enlightened or totally free of ego to transmit chi.

Some are, some are not. So chi is something that some people have access to within themselves, and they transmit it. It can be in the service of the one, of, it can also be used in the service of ego.

So that can vary from person to person. There are people, everybody knows charisma. There are certain people in this world who have great charisma, and that is an outflow of chi energy that is in most cases used by the ego.

That's very interesting. Some people have access to chi within, but the ego can use it for its own purposes. And they don't know that this is what they do.

So people feel very much energized in the presence of somebody who has a lot of chi. Doesn't necessarily mean that this person can help you to become free of ego. It is an energy experience.

It can even have beneficial effects. The danger would be that it is being put in the ego. So a very interesting example of that would be a person who has enormous energy that's totally in the use of ego, like Hitler.

When Hitler spoke, he had charisma, and there was an energy outflow. And I believe that happened to him accidentally because early in his life, he was a normal person without any great ambitions. He wanted to become an artist.

He wanted to get into art school. He couldn't get into art school. Then he was in the First World War, where something happened to him there.

There was a big explosion very close to him. And after that, he went blind for a period of time. I don't remember how long, a few days or a few weeks.

He was blind. I believe that created in him a hole that enabled him to have some access to a flow of chi energy. It created a hole in the ego structure, but the rest of the ego structure remained intact.

And then when he recovered from that, a transformation happened, and there was an enormous influx of chi and that charisma going into him when he spoke. But the ego was still intact, so it used that for its purposes. So you need to see the level of frequency can be, and I believe you, all of you know, can tell the difference between an energy stream that arises directly out of stillness and an energy stream that has more of a vibration to it.

Here, Diksha happens naturally, not that I ever feel that I give you something. It is not me who gives you something. It happens because there is the openness.

It happens by itself. And that energy is in you, not because I have given it to you, but because it has been deepened or activated in you. Now, how much of that is still present when you leave here depends on many factors.

I cannot say that everybody who leaves here will be able to also transmit that to others. Some do, some don't. It depends on how the mind returns, perhaps the ego returns, identification with thought might return and obscure it again temporarily.

But once it's been activated, there's no going back. So in every situation when this spiritual teaching happens, in one form or another, there is a transmission of energy, sometimes through stillness, sometimes through looking. It can be through the touch.

It can be through words, because words that come from out of the stillness still carry an energy so that their power goes far beyond the informational value of the words. If they only had informational value, it wouldn't, there would be not much power in the words. They might still be helpful as pointers, but there's an additional energy to words that come out of that.

And some of you know that already because some of you have been yourselves in teaching situations when somebody came up to you and asked a question or said something and an answer came suddenly through you. And you might have been

surprised yourself what, how you, what response came. And some of you have experienced people coming into contact with you, going through a transformation as a result.

Some people feel drawn to you because they recognize something that very obscurely, they also recognize in themselves, perhaps even without knowing it. But when they, when a person is drawn to someone who embodies to a greater or lesser degree, the unconditioned, the space, there's always something already becoming active in the other person. That's why he feels drawn.

So it's not that ever that you give something to someone, that feeling itself can be misleading. I can give it to you. Some people who discover that they have certain ability to heal to some extent, when they first discover it, they can come very enthusiastic and almost whoever they meet, they say, I can see what's wrong with you, but I could heal you.

So it's not so much that you do it, but it happens through you when this openness is there. And when it's, the openness disappeared, it doesn't happen anymore. Doesn't mean you've lost it.

It's there. Nobody can give you complete freedom from ego. Nobody can give you enlightenment as such.

Things can be helpful, very helpful. But if ever it happens that it looks as if a person or a teacher had given you, given someone enlightenment, those cases are extremely rare. And in those cases, the readiness of the person was such that almost anything would have triggered the last thing, the last, the apple would have dropped anyway from the tree.

And if they'd slipped on a banana skin, they probably would have become enlightened. Yeah. So things, many things are helpful.

And it's a question of using the help that is offered without becoming dependent on anything in the external world, not even dependent on any teaching, but always as quickly as possible, not dependent on any teacher, but still able to use the teacher because the universe is offering that to you, but always realizing ultimately it is in I. I am the answer to all my questions. I am the answer to the search.

I am what I'm looking for. I am what I'm looking for, what I have been looking for, for a long time. Sometimes that get misinterpreted by the mind and then the mind says, I am Eckhart.

Or Eckhart is the one. Always very careful if there's any teacher or teaching that implies or openly says there are many different kinds of spiritual energy, but mine or ours is the one that really works. Then there is some ego there.

Any claim of specialness you have to look out for. There's hiding some kind of ego. Some teachers say, I'm the only one at the moment on the planet.

Follow me because there's no other true teaching. Now, this is very satisfying to some part of you. If I said, I'm the only one, follow me, there would be a part in some of you, there would be one part that feels enormously strengthened and it would even feel good for a while, but it would be part of the ego because of course the ego wants to be part of the only one because it will make itself special by being associated with the great special one.

So claims of specialness or any ideas that you are special, the only one, the greatest, there's ego hiding. Also the strong compulsion to dismiss other teachings or teachers often is a concealed form of ego I welcome any form of spiritual teaching and always try to look for that in it, which is helpful. Some have things in it that are helpful and then other aspects that could be misleading, but I like to look at that which is helpful.

There's a book out called The Secret, which many people find helpful and other people don't like. I like to look at something in the book that is actually great and this is, it talks about gratefulness, gratitude, that is the very foundation for everything in your life. And that of course you can't have without being aligned with the present moment.

Gratitude arises naturally. There may be other things in the book that could be misinterpreted. For example, you could believe that by manifesting many big things in your life, you're going to be happy.

No, but if that is your path, then why not manifest the house, the car and so on and then realize it doesn't make you happy. So that has a purpose too. It all works.

And if you feel drawn to a teacher who has a big ego and you follow that teacher for a while and suddenly you're disappointed and you realize the teacher and you feel in a moment of deep crisis, then that is the most wonderful learning experience also for going beyond your ego. So it all has its place and its purpose. Whatever teacher or teaching you feel drawn to is right for you and you will learn.

It's fine. So again, just look out for the specialness, either making someone special or through making someone special, making yourself special. Special meaning superior in some way.

That's called a spiritual ego. More advanced. And groups, where group develops an ego, that is a very common thing in almost every sect, so-called sect, the collective ego of the group.

Usually, in a sect, it needs to see itself as the only ones. That's the power of the sect. That's the ego power of the sect.

And it's enormously stimulating for the ego. You feel, wow, I'm part of this only thing in the whole world. But you've cut yourself off.

It's always good after you've said what you had to say in any conversation to come back to a point of rest and stillness. Even in a little conversation, always step back. That means there are spaces.

You're not taken over. You're not incarnating into a mind stream. You're coming to the, continuously coming to the end of incarnation, or even better, not incarnate at all, which means there's still a presence in the background even as you speak.

Incarnate means to lose yourself in the form that arises. You can be part of the world of form without incarnating into form, which is losing yourself in form, in thought, in reactions, and so on. Presence, stillness, alert, spacious presence is also very powerful in dissolving conflict.

Discord in the world. If you should go into a situation where there is conflict, and there are many situations like that in this world, meeting it in this state of absolute presence, it could, it is also a form of healing that you do not, somebody comes healing in one way or another emotional healing, physical healing, mental healing, the healing of situations, the healing in a wider sense is not being drawn to the same level as the conflict.

The conflict is thought-generated and emotion-generated, and you bring in this alert presence, and you simply are there as that. And you're not trying to figure out how to solve the situation. You don't go to that level.

You're simply there as an alert presence. You're the bringer of space into the situation. And that is the most wonderful thing.

And then something happens, and what form that takes can vary. It could be that somehow the conflict dissolves. One person says something that leads to a sudden resolution, or you find yourself saying something that was not premeditated, that brings about a solution in the situation, or the energy field shifts, and the whole thing is recognized as nothingness, which most conflicts are nothingness.

Or as Shakespeare puts it, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Full of sound and fury. It's nothing because time, impermanent.

Go to the graveyard and see where it all ends. All the turmoil and all the drama. Nothing.

So you already need to recognize it as nothing, and that knowledge, the no thingness you bring into this dimension of thingness, you bring the dimension of no thingness. And then situations become healed. Not that you feel, I am healing it.

It happens. There was a spiritual teacher and healer called Joel Goldsmith, and he was

also a great healer, and he taught how to heal by nothing-guising, so to speak, situations and conditions. So a person would come to him or telephone, say, I've got this or that condition, and immediately he would go into absolute presence and stillness, in which there is no person and there is no condition to heal.

There's only absolute fullness and presence. Emptiness and fullness are the same thing. It's the same no thing.

There's only fullness and presence. There's nobody to heal. There's absolute perfection, timeless stillness.

And that's how many healings happened. He never recognized the reality of any condition. And this is one of the functions of space consciousness that you can bring.

Many of us here have been blessed with children. We seem to lose contact with the form of consciousness space we pursue here. Even early in childhood, we already seem to lose contact.

Do you find it advisable to introduce or reintroduce the ideas of not identifying with the thought, the mind, spacious listening, and so on, to the children in some form? And if yes, how would you do this in practice apart from the attempt we all make to influence the world by practicing this awareness on a personal level? Children.

Now, the last part of the question, of course, already mentions the most important way of teaching children is to live it yourself. Living it is teaching it. The primary teaching of it is that how spacious are you at home with your child?

How spacious are you at home with your husband or wife or partner? Is your life consumed by one thing after another that you have to do? There's always, what's this thing?

What do you have to do? Have you done this? Have you done that?

We need to do that. Do you ever truly listen? That is the teaching.

If you can listen to your child while the child talks to you, that is the teaching. Your own presence is the main teaching. Apart from that, you can perhaps pay attention so that the child does not become totally drawn into the madness of this world by excessive television watching or video game playing, whatever they do, which takes your attention out of the body, and you become, it's a loss of energy, and even young children begin to focus on the screen where they play this or that.

Completely out of connectedness with being, with their body, the inner body, out where they become dependent on continuous stimulus to feel alive. And then withdrawal symptoms happen when they stop playing after half an hour or one hour. The

restlessness remains.

Where's the next stimulus? And then they can't focus on anything anymore because the television teaches them that the attention span, the normal attention span of a TV image is about four seconds these days. The images change so quickly on television, they go, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup.

It's amazing madness. You never have, you can never focus on any one. It always goes, and the next, and the next, and the next.

When I was a child, there were two channels on TV, and there were long moments of stillness between programs when they showed just a still picture. Who would do that nowadays? You could look at a picture, a landscape, for three minutes until the next program started, and sometimes with nice music in the background.

And the images were much longer, not bombarded by flashing images. The child needs to, don't let the child get lost in concepts when you teach language to a child, when you teach what things are called so that they get trapped in the labels. Continuously direct the child's attention to the actual perception or experience of the thing so that the child just goes beyond just naming it.

If you have a tree, let the child touch the tree. Let it point, take the child's attention to it. Look at this, look at that detail.

Can you feel that? Can you smell that? Can you be present?

So it's not so much you need to teach the child to be still, but you teach the child not to get trapped in words and concepts excessively. You have to teach what things are called, but that's not it. If this is not a tree, we call it a tree.

This is not a sparrow or swallow, we call it, and then you continue to look after it has been named. Touch. Breathing.

Feeling the inner body, children can do that easily. You can introduce to a child the aliveness. They have it originally as a natural way of being, but they lose it very quickly in this world.

So pointing out to a child that they can feel that they are alive is relatively easy. And another one is pointing out to the child the pain body, because most children have pain bodies too already. And then I talked about it in a book somewhere.

The, so you point to a child, after the child has had a pain body attack, either through hysterical screaming or throwing things or shouting or withdrawing, going into complete withdrawal. After that, you talk to the child the next day and ask what happened yesterday, not in any way judging or condemning, but in a curious way. Encourage the

child to be curious, to find out what that energy that the child experienced when he threw something at the wall or threw him or herself on the floor or started screaming.

And, I want this ice cream, I want ice cream, I want it. Wanting can be enormously powerful already. I want, and then enormous amount of pain comes in.

Oh, dreadful. Sometimes when you look at a child, dreadful pain for nothing and ice cream, it's the pain body. It's more than just the ice cream that it's not getting.

There is an old pain that's come to life again. And at that moment, you just have to allow it and be the space for it, for the child. Not react, some parents get suddenly very anxious and, oh, stop, stop, stop that, stop that, stop screaming.

I can't stand this anymore. No, that doesn't work. You have to be the space for it and don't, now this pain body wants some reaction from you.

It wants more pain. It wants you to shout back. It almost wants you to hit the child.

I wouldn't recommend it because that's exactly what the pain body wants. It wants more pain. It wants to provoke you and provoke you and provoke you so that finally you give the pain body more experience of pain.

And so, of course, you have to be there as the presence, the space for it. That's the most wonderful thing you can do when your child gets drawn into that. Be the space for it and don't give in to the demands of the pain body, but in a very gentle way, be the space.

Don't, after you've said no three times to the third eye scream, and that is what becomes a trigger for the pain body, and then if the pain body screams enough at you, don't say, okay, then have the third eye scream. That teaches a very dangerous lesson to a child and that what it teaches is the more unhappy I get, the more likely I am to get what I want. And if that lesson goes into adulthood, when the child complains and shouts and screams enough, finally you give in just to keep it so that you don't have to listen to the screaming and shouting anymore.

When the child grows up, the pattern is inside. Unhappiness gets me what I want. A very dysfunctional, it was true for the child, unfortunately, but the adult still unconsciously believes that unhappiness will get me what I want.

And then whenever they feel dissatisfied, there's enormous influx of unhappiness in the unconscious belief that the world or some God that's hiding somewhere, if you just show that you're unhappy enough, will finally give you what you want. And of course, in the world, the opposite is true. You can be sure that you're not going to get what you want because unhappiness blocks everything.

So you don't teach the child unhappiness works. So be there as the space for the pain

body. And the next day or a few hours later say, what happened to you when you threw yourself on the, or you couldn't stop screaming?

And then you ask just a few questions so that an awareness comes in retrospectively in the child that looks at what happened. What did that feel like? Ask questions to encourage awareness arising that a witness that can look at what it felt like.

And do you remember two weeks ago, the same thing happened? Wasn't, was that the same thing? What is that thing?

Does it, does it have a name? Could ask, what's it called? If it had a name, if it doesn't have a name, if it had one, what would be its name?

For example, but the questions will come through you, the right questions. What, does it have a color or does it this energy? What, what is that?

What do you feel? And then the child just says a few words about it. And the next time it happens, it doesn't mean it won't happen again.

But the next time the pain body returns, triggered by some thwarted wanting, some unfulfilled desire, the next time there may be a remnant of awareness in the child that is able to know that that's what's happening. And again, after it's happened, you again talk about it. And then a time may come when in the middle of it, you can say, oh, that is again, isn't it?

And some part of the child, the awareness will hear what you're saying. If you had not prepared the child for it, there would only be the pain body and the pain body would not hear what you're saying. There it is would be meaningless to the pain body.

So there's a growing, you encourage, you help the child to have that aware presence in the background. That is until the child, there's enough awareness in the child for the child one day to say, oh, mom, that's your pain body right now, isn't it? And are you present enough to say, yes, you're right.

The main learning, however, is always your interaction with a child and your interaction with your partner, if there is a partner at home, husband and wife, partners, whatever. The interaction that is the most powerful teaching and how you interact with the child, how you listen. When the child tells you what happened, give him or her space, give him or her space, listen in spacious awareness.

That applies, of course, to every relationship, your wife, your husband, your partner, give them space. Keep, you are the giver of space, really. That's your main function.

If you want to transmit Diksha into this world is to give space, to be there as space. That's the transformation of the world. And then, yes, you're also a temporary little

person still, of course, sometimes the person is there more strongly, but gradually, the space makes the person more transparent.

In the space, the person becomes transparent. This looks like a long letter, but I don't think it is that long. I've been studying medicine for eight years with several breaks.

The finals are coming up next summer. I'm challenged. I find it hard to stay present when I'm opening the big books filled with mind-stimulating scientific discussions.

Could you give a few pointers on how to stay in presence while studying? Thank you, in mind and out of presence. What I, this is to do not only with studying, it's to do with any intellectual work and computer work, which is mind-stimulating.

Bringing spaces into your work is essential, little spaces. When you shut the book, go and feel the inner body. Look at the sky or the tree for one or two minutes, three minutes, four minutes.

Even in the middle of a book, after reading a few pages, be aware of the presence underneath the mind, the body is very helpful when you're very much immersed in mind to get back to the presence, go via the inner body and feel the aliveness in the body. After that, go to sense perceptions, become alert and look at things without labeling them. If you hold onto the inner body, the need to label them isn't there.

So you step from mind, okay, shut the book, or switch off the screen, or go and look away from the screen and go into body. Then you start, once you can feel some of the inner body, don't believe the mind when it says, I can't do it now, it's not enough time anyway. There's always time for two or three minutes of feeling.

And then using the inner body as an anchor, look around in still, aware presence at things, wherever, whatever it may be, choiceless attention. And you listen to their sounds, sense perceptions, no labeling. And that's for just a few minutes.

And then open another book or go back to the screen. But even while you are still studying on a page, there's no reason why you cannot occasionally break chapter, after a few chapters, two or three chapters, look up, take three conscious breaths. Conscious breath means your attention observes as the air moves in and out of your body.

Now, a conscious breath means you can't be thinking at the same time because then you can't observe your breathing. That was one of the Buddha's favorite meditations, breath awareness. Another meditation that probably, nobody knows for sure, that the Buddha taught was the inner body.

He didn't call it inner body. Can't remember what he called it. Maybe vipassana, it's feeling the inner energy field.

Some scriptures, it's in some of the old scriptures. So the Buddha never said, stop thinking. He said, observe your breath.

And of course, you can't think at the same time. So two chapters, three conscious breaths. Actually, your mind works better in that way too.

We're less confused. You intersperse, so your mental activity becomes interspersed with space. So you bring little spaces in there.

Never believe the mind when it tells you, can't do it now. Yes, you can. Some people find it helpful to have a flower next to the computer or next to their books.

And when they look up, go into the body, then look at something natural like a flower or plant. One person told me that he had my photo next to his computer, which at first, I didn't like that very much. And then he said, well, what I do is I look into your eyes and then I can feel my being.

Well, if that's the case, then it's okay. If you realize this is not what you're looking at, isn't important, but if it puts you in touch with the presence that you are, then it could work that way. So you're not feeling that he's going to help me.

No, I, he is I, the one I. So he can put me in touch with the I, not as an external presence, not as an external help, but as helping me to be who I am. I am here.

So the, if you look at the photo and it reminds me that, oh, I am here, then it could work in that way. Another way is if you look at a, if you have a favorite photo of some spiritual teacher, it's very helpful to sometimes, if that works for you, you look at the photo and once you feel the presence that you are, then you put it away or you close your eyes, dismiss the form and just be with the formless. Otherwise you continue to think there's something out there that's going to help you.

The help is here. There's a wonderful photo of those of you who know Ramana Maharshi, that somebody took a photo of him and just a beautiful look. I still have that at home and I sometimes look at him, but I never think that I'm looking at Ramana Maharshi.

I'm looking at myself. I feel the very, the being. That was the photo when he, the photographer came and Ramana said, maybe there's not enough light.

Photographer said, you are the light. You are the light, he replies to. You are the light.

Jesus said it, you are the light of the world. What does that mean? You are the consciousness that gives rise to the world.

Without that, there would be nothing. Do you keep a scrapbook? I'm not quite sure what exactly that is.

I think it's little memories or photos or things that you put in a book. That was last year's retreat, a little. No.

No. Well, that was easy. There are many more interesting questions, probably, but right now we let go of the questions.

Being in touch with a place within where there are no questions. There is that place.

[Speaker 2] (7:34:14 - 7:38:36)

Oh You You

[Speaker 1] (7:40:47 - 8:06:36)

Conditioning Is dissolving it's wonderful to see that you can actually recognize it in people When something else shines through a presence Shining through the person and that's what have what's happening to All of you You're losing weight Psychic right here the heaviness Of the person the psychic heaviness of the person And here you're learning Becoming familiar with the state of not thinking In the sessions and outside as you practice Here we practice a lot listening And that's the transmission if you want to use those words Of a state of consciousness That's the state of consciousness out of which the words come In that sense The stillness between the words is more important than the words At first it may appear that Your life is becoming reduced When thinking no longer dominates your life Internally one could say Not that much is happening anymore And some of your friends may not invite you anymore to dinner parties After a while you go say, okay, I'm not thinking but now what It is a new energy it is very very subtle compared to the usual mind energy It is so subtle that At first it seems like a nothingness You could compare it to Imagine spending a whole night six hours in a noisy discotheque And then after six hours you step outside The doors close behind you and you're out in the middle of the night In the countryside in the near forest And all the noises there are very subtle And as a stillness, but you've been deafened by the noise because you just spent six hours in a disco so at first Withdrawal symptom And of course now you've spent a whole lifetime or a thousand lifetimes With a mental noise So at first you may not detect the subtle Joy that is in the simple state of stillness or being Because It's too subtle and Fine compared to the mind generated things including mind generated pleasures But then As you get used to that new energy you can sense an underlying Goodness the joy and the liveness A sense of well-being in the background The real joy is the joy of being yourself It is derived not from something that happens Or some object But from the very essence of your being so the joy is to know yourself The being That you are the consciousness That is unconditioned to know yourself as that is Joy But even that's not the right word Because all words Refer to the sense-perceived object consciousness Peace But even that's not quite right One sign that this is happening is that you enjoy Little things more than big things You enjoy Relatively insignificant things Making a cup of tea watching The leaves in the tree Listening to the

rain Watching people one of my favorite activities or rather non-activities I don't have many favorite activities Is sitting in a corner in a cafe And watch the people Sit and walk in and walk out And not Having any labels upon anybody Simply being there as the space for all those people And there's a great joy enjoying all the Countless Life forms so many different human beings all slightly different and yet the same And And enjoying that all that that movement of the human forms And you are there as the space for that Then as a practice you can go into a noisy place and see if you can be the space for that A place where usually you would say it's not nice. Let's get out of here And usually if you can get out why not get out but as a practice Stay there for a while and see if you can be the space for that Experiment with different things maybe the noisiest part of the city where you live Stand or sit there Can you be the space for that in other words can you perceive all that And still feel the background of stillness I used to do that a lot when I lived in london different parts And it's a very enjoyable thing to do even on the underground the tube as it's called Not a place that's particularly pleasant So it's not a pleasant condition, but the practice is Can I be the space for this condition too? In my case it just happened naturally I didn't ask the question can I be the space for this I just was the space for this But as if you're a transitional being then you can make it into a practice and say oh, let's see Can I be present here And all the activities that one normally does not enjoy, but you just have to do them So that usually would be a means to an end Can I be the space for that going shopping for food? Can I do that with little interference of thinking experiment with that instead of thinking what do I need You just look at the shelves And then as you reach out for something you're in your body and you feel whether the body says yes or no The mind says this is the best chocolate there is I loved it last week when I had it and your hand reaches out and suddenly As you feel your body you feel a contraction The body doesn't want chocolate right now And then you let it stand there And another very very helpful practice is An unpleasant condition That comes into your life naturally Well all that you create This could be anything let's see Well think of indian yogis some yogis stand on one leg for 20 years Now you would think you don't have to do that, of course But if you there is a reason behind that it may they may be taking it to an extreme But the reason behind it is to detach from the discomfort that arises or even the pain So that you become the space for it So in the west some of these people would regard it as mad But in india, they are revered because perhaps somehow people Sense that there is something there even no matter how mad it looks That there's something there But you can practice that with little things slight discomforts even as you're sitting here Or if you meditate you're sitting with your legs crossed and the pain comes in can you be the space for that Some discomfort comes in can you just stay with it instead of immediately changing Can you just stay with that and be the space for that? You can even try standing on one leg for just two minutes instead of 20 years And see that certain discomfort arises and you want to change and you just carry on So there there's a space in which that's allowed to be That's quite interesting to Experiment with that and when a habitual reaction comes You can also be the space for that the reaction that says I don't I hate this place And can you stay two minutes longer

in this place and be a space for it then you can go So But instead of become being the immediately being the reaction be the space for the reaction if you can't be the space for the condition Your second opportunity is being the space for the reaction So you always get another chance Your second chance is If you miss the awareness of the condition and be the space for that be the awareness of Behind the reaction and be the space for that or the judgment in your mind and be the space for that So There are enough little unpleasantnesses in one's life that one can practice with you don't have to seek things out Or you could just little things not nothing big.

I'm not telling you to do anything dangerous or big Just small discomforts and just instead of immediately withdrawing stay with it just for a little while Hand in cold water, for example, okay, you want to pull it out. Okay, but I believe it in for 20 seconds And be the space for that there's a coldness and there's the space And then don't leave your hand in then take it out If an ache comes or pain in the body you can practice it You don't have to do what medieval people did or in some other cultures inflict pain Don't recommend that But pain comes naturally sometimes And instead of reacting and creating another level of resistance to the pain, which is path suffering Surrender and be the space and then go to the doctor if you have to but while you go there Be the space for the toothache Which can be excruciating And Or whatever it is Pain here pain there in the back in the head And so you become deep Not that you become it you realize that you are deep there is a depth Not a shallow shallow entity Okay Danish or scandinavian people are already normally a little more quiet or northern peoples. Maybe it's a little easier for them. I don't know To be the space I remember seeing a film many years ago I was in my early 20s Backman a swedish film in black and white There was a man Going through the forest and he lost his way and he saw a woodcutter.

He was cutting And he said to him it was his subtitles in swedish Do you know the way to such and such a place and the woodcutter went? Finally he put down his axe And he said to him it's Over there go that way I was very impressed by that I have now realized before we come to the questions why the danish people are so peaceful Now, as you know, a thousand years ago, it came to me in Copenhagen in a cemetery. A thousand years ago, the people who went out from here, they were very aggressive, it's unimaginable.

Swedish, Danish, the whole area, they were wild people and they got on these boats and then they invaded England and northern Germany and France and just smashing everything up in their path. And so my theory is that all the violent people left Denmark and in northern Germany became the Prussian army much later. And in England, their descendants became football hooligans.

So now this is why it's so wonderfully peaceful here. Let's see if there are any more questions or perhaps they have already dissolved. Just one or two words about questions.

Vital questions are more important and more helpful to everybody than curious questions or very abstract questions. Besides, I probably won't know the answer to those. So abstract questions about the subtleties of Buddhist philosophy or curious questions about my breakfast this morning or whatever.

And even questions like, but what would you say to somebody who is suffering from such and such? And he comes to you and, well, is that you? I can't really, I can't answer it if it's hypothetical.

It has to be vital. So to do with your presence practice or somebody very close to you in a relationship or your pain body, if you still have one. Now, there is a microphone somewhere which will travel to the questioner.

However, I can only see vaguely the people. I can see this side better than this side because of the light. So I can't necessarily see people raising their hands.

So somebody else may help me and choose one or two people to ask questions. So if you can just put up your hand. If there are no questions, don't invent some questions.

I'll be very happy if there are no questions too.

[Speaker 2] (8:06:45 - 8:06:58)

Can you speak about sleep and dreaming?

[Speaker 1] (8:06:59 - 8:22:03)

Thank you. You may find that as presence increases in your life, the dream activity at night decreases. A lot of the dream activity at night is processing of things that were not fully faced.

It is the expression of underlying emotional states for which the mind is seeking an image in order to explain the already existing emotional state. So when you dream of a monster, for example, let's say you have a nightmare, you're running away from a monster and you experience anxiety or fear. The reason why you experience anxiety or fear is not the dream.

The dream is the mind's attempt to form an image that explains the fear that you feel. So the dream does cause the emotion, but the emotion causes the dream, the dream image. And that is, by the way, the case with many forms of unconsciousness also.

For example, because when we talk of dream, one level of dream is what happens when you sleep. Another level of dream is what happens you are so-called awake, but not really awake because you are run by the conditioned mind. So there you also experience something very close to what we just described in a dream.

The mind attempts to find an explanation, for example, for fear, which is a very common underlying state in many people. And so when people are very suspicious of others, which is a very normal thing with ego, the others, other people are always, you never quite know what they want from you. And you're thinking of what's, why did you say that?

What's the motivation behind that? You're trying to figure out and then finding some kind of motivation. This is quite normal.

It's only if you take it to a little bit further, when the person becomes so-called suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, that you realize it is the same pattern, seeing an enemy and finding explanations for things that are quite fictitious. Because the mind is trying to explain the terrible fear. It just cannot understand the fear that in some egos is very, very strong.

So it projects, it creates a story about people wanting to hurt me or they're after me that is fictitious, people in your life or around you in the street. This is one of the symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia is to form fictions that create fear, but they don't really create fear. The fiction is the mind's attempt to excite some kind of explanation for what you feel.

So it creates a fiction and it says, you see all these people in the street, they are observing me. They want to take something away from me. They want whatever they want, whatever the story.

And so everybody can recognize that as it's a dreamlike state, but it already exists in the normal egoic state. And there are many other examples one could have for this. So if we come back now to the actual dream, as more presence arises in your life, the processing dream or the dreams in which unpleasant emotional states become dreams, the mind's attempt to interpret them gradually becomes lessened because you have fewer and fewer painful emotional states as presence arises.

So there's less chaotic dream activity in your life. There may still be some dreams, but not particularly chaotic or painful dreams, some slight remnants from what was left from the day. And then there are those rare dreams when suddenly you have an insight or realization.

They may still happen. They could even happen more in certain people's lives as more presence comes. So you have dreams that actually tell you something in symbolic form.

For some people, there comes a period in their lives when they have that particularly, and then sometimes that period comes to an end. That was the case with me for about a couple of years. I had very vivid dreams of a symbolic nature, in one of which, for example, I saw many, many years ago, I saw books lying on the table, and they had the

name Eckhart on them, and I knew I had written them, but I hadn't written anything yet.

And at that time, my first name wasn't Eckhart. The dream was one of the reasons why it became that. So in the dream, I saw these books, and I knew I had written these books.

And that was a simple image, but many other things happened. It was a time of getting messages, coming out of presence. And so the book was telling me that that was my destiny.

I didn't quite realize that at the time. I just thought it had something to do with the name. So they already point us where to go.

So in that case, those dreams are of a completely different quality from the emotionally charged dreams, or the dreams that are simply processing dreams. So they have a particular power, and often the characters that you see in that dream are not characters from your daily life. So those are dreams that are sometimes of an archetypal nature.

So during those two years, I had often very vivid dreams, some of them pointing to what I was meant to do. And if at that time I had been in Jungian analysis, the analyst would have been delighted with all that dream activity. Another thing, of course, if you become interested in your dreams, if you write them down every morning, what you can still remember, then you begin to remember more.

And so it can be very nice to keep a dream diary for a while. The more you attempt to remember, even just a fragment, you honor it, you write it down. And for most people, working with dreams is, as it was for me, and I know others too, it is a period in your life.

And then the time comes when you go beyond that period, and dreams no longer become all that meaningful. So that's, it's for some of you, this will happen. For some, it may not happen, that dreams become meaningful.

So if you want to, if you have one or two deep dreams, then write them, by all means, write them down. I still, at that time, I did write down quite a few of the dreams. Sleep, it is important to go into sleep consciously, and to come out of sleep consciously.

That will also affect the number of dreams you have, or the kind of dreams you have, or you may even have almost no dreams. Going into sleep consciously is certainly not stimulate the mind with watching television in bed. But if you want to read in bed, it's fine, but then you put the book aside, and then the last few moments as you go into sleep, it's important to be present.

And if that keeps you awake, so much the better. Be in your body. If the mind uses this, for many minds, there's a habit of when you go into bed, and you switch off the light, it starts thinking all kinds of weird things, all kinds of weird stories, and things could happen.

And that's often leading to feeling upset or fearful. So let that be a period as you go into sleep, let that be a period where you first of all embrace the state of awareness. Be in the body.

If the mind wants to think, observe that, and then you can let go. No thought is important at that point. Even the thought, tomorrow I have to do this.

You're here now. I'm here now. I'm here now.

Breathing, feeling the inner body, lying in this energy field of every cell. Lie on your back preferably, every cell present. And that's extremely, extremely wonderful to lie there in that presence, with every cell of the body present.

I loved that so much for a while that I never wanted to go to sleep anymore. So I would drink two or three cups of coffee so that I could be awake all night. And fasting in the morning, very important, where you have a little gap when you don't remember your problems.

After you wake up, you don't remember your history or your problems. All you, there is an alert space. You wake up, and then bring in presence there so that you delay a little bit the onset of the huge engine in the head.

When I saw the film to the Titanic, the engines of the Titanic, that's for many people, that's the human mind. They go, there were steam engines at the time. And that takes a long time before they start up, and it takes a while before they stop.

And that applies to the human mind too. So the engines of the Titanic start up for most people very quickly after they wake up. So let waking up be also a space of awareness.

You're still in bed, and immediately go into the body. And so you get into presence rather than into mind. And then you can get dressed or go into the shower, continuing to be present rather than being totally lost in the shower.

Don't even know anymore whether it's the end or the beginning of your shower, because you're so immersed in thinking. You're in the shower, conscious of every sensation. Avoidance of media at that point is particularly important, because if you switch something on at that point early in the morning, it is madness.

Because all it tells you is, we have a problem there and there. There's a big traffic jam, a huge problem there, and another huge thing going wrong there, and an accident happened there. And then you get the world news even worse.

If you have to listen to the news, I recommend it at a later time. And before you do, come into the body and then switch on and be the space for that. Maybe there's another question.

Maybe I should wear sunglasses.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:08 - 8:22:33)

I just wanted to ask you, you that you have spoken about schizophrenia and bipolarity, is there something else you can tell us about this illness that are proliferating a lot nowadays? And they cause a lot of suffering.

[Speaker 1] (8:22:33 - 8:22:35)

Bipolar? Bipolar.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:36 - 8:22:37)

Bipolar condition?

[Speaker 1] (8:22:37 - 8:22:44)

Yes. Which used to be called manic depressive.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:44 - 8:22:44)

Manic depressive.

[Speaker 1] (8:22:44 - 8:22:47)

Manic depressive, and it's bipolar, yes.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:47 - 8:22:59)

That's right. And there's not a cure yet for those sickness of the mind. Yes.

Do you have some news if it's possible?

[Speaker 1] (8:23:00 - 8:46:58)

Now, again, that's an extreme form, but many so-called normal people also have that to some extent, and that's called, in a very small degree, but it's still considered normal, it's called happy one day, unhappy the next. Now, bipolar, of course, is taking it much, much, much further. So they lose, this is a very good example of losing oneself in an arising condition.

So in the exalted phase, when you feel enormous influx of energy, and then the energy takes you over, it runs your mind and makes you do things that are a little bit unwise. For example, what people do in that phase of that illness, mental condition, they might go out and buy the most expensive they love. Oh, that's a great thing to buy.

How much is it? Only \$5,000. I'll have that.

Here's my credit card. Yeah. And then they, or they have sex relationships, five a day, just one after, that was so great.

I feel so alive. Where's my next bar? So the condition takes you over, and then after a while, when it subsides, you look, you've got all this havoc you've created.

And then you may be taken over by the opposite condition, a very depressed state. You can't get out of bed. So minor forms of that are present in many normal people.

It's part of normal existence. And you only see the, when it goes to an extreme, you see that there is an element of insanity also in normal existence. That person, when that person is in between, there is such a thing as an interlude between the states, that person can then learn what it means to be present.

The cure for that would be to remain as the observer the moment you feel the onset of a particular state. And already there needs to be a considerable amount of presence, a considerable degree of presence in that person, not to be taken over by the enormous influx of that particular energy movement. So you need to detect the very first signs of it as an emotion, wanting to move into the mind, or as a thought, and then be there.

It doesn't mean that immediately these things won't happen anymore, but there is a chance, if you can remain there as the observer, that gradually the condition will not overpower you totally. At first it may still happen and will just become slightly, the intensity of it may be slightly decreased. And then gradually you may be able to sustain the presence as the condition passes through without having to act it out, without incarnating into the condition.

So the key would be presence. Now, presence cannot be, you cannot learn presence while you're in the midst of one of the two polarities. The moment to embrace presence and practice presence is to build it up when you're in between the two phases, build up a presence.

And building up presence is of course what we are doing here, building up presence. You do for yourself whenever you choose to be in the body, to be free of thinking as much as possible in daily life, to be aware of your sense perceptions, presence is building up. So the key to many dysfunctions of the mind, normal and abnormal, there are many normal dysfunctions.

Normal itself is a dysfunction. If it, because human history is created by normal people. And so if you read it, you realize it's insane.

Therefore normal equals insane. So the normal is also insane and it requires the awareness to get to, so that the conditioning no longer overpowers you, the condition no longer overpowers you. So that's a huge challenge.

If you are burdened with such a thing as bipolar disorder, it's a huge challenge, but it is often the case that the greatest challenge in your life becomes your greatest blessing because it is the greatest challenge in your life that forces you into awakening. So what I just said applies also to many, many other things. Depression, there was a question which we didn't get to, a written question on depression.

Somebody periodically says, I lose myself in a depression. And here again, you need to be there, see what is, to what extent your mind participates in the depression, how it, whether your mind feeds it, you feel the energy of it, which is very heavy. I remember it from a kind of distant past.

When I talk about it now, I get a kind of distant memory of what depression feels like in the body. And I know what the mind does. The mind says, it's all, what's the point in getting out of bed?

It's completely, the whole thing is completely absurd. Why should I get out of bed? Why should I wash and get dressed?

What for? There's nothing out there for me. Absolutely nothing.

All this world is insane. Nothing. I'm staying in bed.

Mind activity, identified with that, and the enormous heaviness in the emotional field. And so depression also starts at some point. For many people, it's, they go through phases of depression.

It's very helpful if in any condition, if you can be there, detect it as it starts coming on. Because when you're already in the middle of it, there may not be enough presence left. But if you can detect it at the beginning, as it arises, whatever the condition may be, you can watch it.

The thoughts that usually, the habitual thoughts that go with it. There, there they are. There it says, what's the point in getting out of bed?

There the thought is. What's the point in getting dressed? No point.

Dreadful out there. It's another thought. So you, something is there that is the space for it.

It does not mean the depression will not happen, but it will be less overpowering and probably pass through more quickly. And then you have to practice again. This also applies to addictions of whatever kind, which many people are burdened with.

Addiction to a, addiction to a substance, addiction to food, addiction to whatever it may be, whatever people are addicted to, television watching, television, internet. I tried it a few times and I can feel, yeah, it is addictive. Go on to the next thing and the next thing

and the next thing.

And I've heard of people who spent the whole night in front of that screen. And that's the mind going in there, stimulus. Television is equally addictive.

It takes away for in many cases, it takes away the person's power to push the off button. So they get, they take the remote in their hands and say, okay, they've, I've seen enough now. And now they know the off button is there, but the other channel button is here.

And instead of going there where you wanted it to go, the finger goes to the next channel. There just might be something, you know very well, there's nothing interesting there, but there just might be something, but no, there isn't. Now what the next one, let's just go through again.

I might be missing something very important. Now the great relief with television, it relieves you of the burden of your own mind, because a lot of the time you might notice, unless you watch politicians talking, in which case your mind may be commenting something. But a lot of the time when you watch television, your mind is actually not active by itself.

It links into the TV mind. So the mind is taken over by the words and the images on the TV, but it frees you. That's why people say it's so relaxing to watch TV, because you get away from yourself, the mind's made self.

So you switch into that, the collective mind, which is just as mad as your own mind, because your own mind is only a collective, a personal version of that. But at least it's not your story you're watching, you're watching somebody else's story. So it puts your personal mind to sleep and then something else takes over.

Another mind takes over your mind. So it's so relaxing. And that's why it's so addictive, because for a moment you are free of yourself, but you haven't become more conscious, of course.

It's a form of hypnosis. And so it becomes addictive. And there you can also observe your inability to switch off the TV as an energy.

Okay, I'm going to switch off now, and then observe the resistance, observe the wanting more, which is the mind saying, I want just a little bit more, more. And then you allow that, feel it, and then switch off. Food or drink.

Okay. I want to, late at night, the impulse comes. I need to eat, need something.

I had dinner, but I still need to eat something. A strong impulse to, this feeling of some kind of void. And that's interpreted as hunger.

The mind says, oh, that's hunger. It's not. It's a normal void of the ego that the sense, the lack feeling, there's something missing here.

The mind interprets that as I'm hungry. And then observe that as an energy impulse inside you. Be the space for that.

Experiment with it. Feel the impulse to go to the fridge and grab whatever it is you have in there. The cake, or piece of cheese, or whatever it is.

Instead of immediately walking to the fridge, feel the push, the pull that wants to go there. And don't say go away. No, that doesn't work.

Be the space for it. Then after a couple of minutes, you have more choice. There is the possibility of not going.

Or it may still be very strong, and perhaps you say, okay, I'll go anyway. At least you brought in some space. And perhaps next time, there will be enough space for you not to have to act it out.

It's the space that weakens the dysfunction of the condition. It's of course possible that the impulse comes so suddenly that you don't know it. It's so unconscious and so sudden that it's only in the middle of eating the chocolate cake, you realize that you're eating the chocolate cake.

This is not uncommon. It's quite amazing. Or in the middle of drinking a glass of whiskey, you realize, oh, I must have poured myself a glass of whiskey because I'm drinking it now.

Or smoking another cigarette. How did that get in my mouth? At some point, I must have lit it.

It's amazing. So the impulse can be so overpowering that it makes you completely unconscious, and you become a sleepwalker, and at some point you wake up and say, oh. And there you can say, okay, let's just experiment with stopping smoking for a second, and you put the cigarette, put it down, and observe.

What does the so-called addiction feel like? What does it feel like? Investigate its feeling quality inside you.

Investigate how the addiction uses your mind, what kind of thought it produces in order to justify itself, and in order to make you do what it wants to do. In some way, you can look upon as an addiction as an energy field, which is especially the case in very powerful addictions, for example, to heroin or something like that. It is as if those people carried something inside them that has become a sub-personality.

It is such a powerful energy field. The addiction itself uses your intelligence when it

wants to come up, and there's nothing they can do about it. It's so overpowering.

So here, we talk about, I think there is something one can do, but heroin would be the worst, the most difficult case, probably. So here, what you can do is observe it. If you're in the middle of it, stop and feel the feeling quality of it.

Be aware of how it uses your mind. For example, somebody told me that, who has a problem with overeating, and he said to me, he observed what his mind says every time before he goes to the fridge or into the kitchen when he's not really hungry. And so his mind has this sense, and for years he believed in it, because he was identified.

His mind said, you've had a rough day, you deserve a treat. And at other times, his mind said, well, what is the only thing you've got left, and the only pleasure you have left in your life? Go ahead.

What else do you have? And he believed in those thoughts, identification with thought, not realizing that the energy of the addiction was creating those thoughts. It was the voice of the addiction speaking in his mind.

That's why the disidentification from the mind is so important. As we all know, this also happens, by the way, when the pain body comes up. The mind activity that you have when you're under a pain body attack is the voice of the pain body using your mind.

And whatever thoughts you have to interpret the world or other people or yourself while you are in possession of the pain body is the voice of the pain body, the emotional field that temporarily has taken possession of your mind. It's the pain body speaking, or it's the addiction speaking. It has taken possession of your mind.

So his freedom came when he realized you've had a rough day, you deserve a treat, was a habitual thought created by the addiction. And according to the addiction, every day was a rough day. And every night he deserved a treat and more than one.

And according to the mind, it was the only pleasure he had left in his life, a complete lie, but he believed in it. So it's the stepping back from the condition being is the key. What we are doing here is the key for all those things.

So whatever it is that is still a burden in your life, it is not by fighting it usually that you are able to become free, but by being the aware space for it. We started talking about bipolar conditions. It's not easy.

I'm not saying it is easy to be the aware space for something so overpowering. And many times you may fail. You may be there in the initial stage and then get overpowered again, but at least you were there in the initial stage.

And perhaps it's not much more short lived than before. There will be some progress as

you bring in the aware space, be the space for the condition, which is also an acceptance that this is what I feel, or this is the feeling that is in here at this moment. And there comes acceptance is a vital part of being the space for it.

This is what I feel, the enormous pull towards this or that. So the freedom lies in not fighting the condition, not wanting to get it out of the way, but being space. One more thing, if somebody else cannot be the space, they get become overpowered by whatever condition it is, perhaps somebody close to you, then you have to be the space.

We mentioned it briefly before. You have to be the space for them. You have to accept that this is their state at the moment and be the space.

You do whatever you can on a practical level to help, of course, but there's always only so much you can do on a practical level. And don't let yourself be drained of energy by somebody who comes to you continuously with problems, but they refuse to change. They don't want presence.

They want a different kind of energy. They want your mind energy and your emotional energy and your psychic energy. They want to say, help me, tell me what to do.

I'll tell you what my problems are and you tell me what to do. Just listen, give me your attention. And then they go away, feel better, you feel worse.

Then they come back, nothing has changed and it starts again. So this is, now there is attention that has an object and that is attention that goes through thought. It is attention that says you should do that.

Why don't you try that? Attention that has form and there is formless attention that is presence. Presence, it cannot really be used addictively.

So presence is simply being there as the space. So when somebody tells you their problems and you are the space, you are not feeding them. In fact, they may become disenchanted with you because they don't want the space.

They want to be fed with your psychic energy. Another question. At the back, I see somebody, I see several hands.

I don't know.

[Speaker 2] (8:47:05 - 8:47:18)

Hello. You are often talking about the conscious shift in the human and I wonder what is your opinion about why is this happening?

[Speaker 1] (8:47:19 - 9:00:10)

Why? Why is the conscious shift happening? Ah, thank you.

It's happening now to more than a few isolated individuals here and there, as it used to be the case in the past. It's happening now on a much larger scale for the simple reason that it has to happen for our species to even survive on the planet. And we've reached a point, a critical point, where the normal human consciousness has created so much destruction on the planet and has become so dysfunctional that there is not only one way in which humanity would destroy itself, but there are six, seven potential ways and each one of them would be enough for humanity to destroy itself.

So it is happening now for the first time on a large scale because it is a necessity before the shift in consciousness was a luxury, so to speak. A few people, isolated flowers, I call them, here and there appeared, but there were very few flowers, very few. Now you might ask another why question because why questions are interesting.

Every why question usually leads to another why question, but let's just answer one more why question and then after that we'll come to the end of why. Now you might ask, of course, and I'm sure it has come up in your mind, why is humanity so dysfunctional? That would be a good title for a book.

Let's see if we can keep a very long story very short. For example, the myth in the Old Testament about the apple and Adam and Eve, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, I believe describes the arising of the ability to think and differentiate. They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

They can now, because thinking is this thing, this is that, that is that, judging, thinking. The arrival of thinking also meant that they lost their natural state of connectedness with being, which was the so-called paradise. Also, in many other myths of different cultures, there is a very frequent myth of the golden age that once existed for humans.

And also in India there is the myth of, at very early times, the golden age and then a progressive deterioration. So thinking was, on the one hand, a wonderful thing to happen to humans. It enabled them to do many things, to become many things, a new evolutionary stage.

And the loss of connectedness with the oneness of life was very, very gradual. At first, thinking wasn't a problem. It was just interesting.

New things could be done. And it developed very, very slowly at first, very slowly. It probably took a thousand years to think of something new, a little tool or something, or a new tool.

And a thousand years later, somebody else thought of another tool to make. And then gradually, building up, building up. And as thinking increased and the activity of the mind, it absorbed more and more consciousness.

Consciousness, which in the state of connectedness with being existed largely in an undifferentiated state of oneness, of formlessness, but natural in the same way that an animal senses its natural rootedness in being. Humans felt this natural rootedness in being, which they gradually only left as more and more of the formless being became forms made into thought. And as this became more and more differentiated, of course, the world outside which humans made become more and more complex and differentiated gradually.

And then it built up the momentum. And then the rate of change increased and mind activity increased at first very slowly. And then as it reached 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th century, acceleration more and more.

And that was also the acceleration of finding your entire sense of identity bound up in mind activity. So you have humans totally dominated by the ego with all its dysfunctions, an entity that is ill at ease at the best of times, that is always wanting something that feels always not enough. Why?

Because it's not rooted in anything deep. It's a superficial entity. So it creates havoc, looking to complete itself through acquiring as much of stuff as possible from others, through a fictitious sense of power over others, through creating as many enemies as possible, because in fighting against others, you get a stronger sense of who you are, of your own fictitious identity.

And not feeling, not sensing anymore what you are doing to other life forms. The ability for empathy with other life forms got lost. We are now regaining it because the shift is happening.

But if you look at the dreadful cruelty that humans inflicted on each other, though they still do it, but gradually there are many people now have much more empathy than 200 years ago. Look at the history, history books, see what they did then. People would watch people being burned, not to 300 years ago, whatever, being burned to death.

It would be a spectacle. Then nowadays, at least around here, it would not, not be happening. So empathy is growing.

Gradually, the ego is receding and being replaced by a completely new level of consciousness. But the critical period is when one way of being reaches the final stage, because as it reaches the final stage, that way of being, which is the thinking way, totally thinking-based way, becomes more and more dysfunctional. It becomes dysfunctional because it's the final stage of it.

So the closer you get to the end, the worse conditions become. And the history of the 20th century is a prime example of that, the dreadfulness of that. So that is the madness.

The dysfunction is such that it is mad in the same way that a caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it becomes a butterfly. There is a stage in the life of the caterpillar when it can't crawl anymore. Life gets more and more difficult as a caterpillar, because it's not meant to be a caterpillar anymore.

And suddenly, his whole existence as a caterpillar disintegrates. And out comes this beautiful, totally, how could that beautiful thing with wings that takes off and flies come out of that? And how could this beautiful consciousness that arises from humans come out of this mad species?

But it's happening. I'm just as amazed at this as I was when I bought the cactus last year. And I went on a trip, I got home, and it had flowered.

How could this thing that looks so hostile, that says, don't you dare get close to me, how could that suddenly produce something so soft and gentle and beautiful and almost ethereal as that flower? And that's a miracle when it happens. So we are experiencing this miracle of the arising of a new consciousness.

At the same time, the old has not quite come to an end. It is ending, which means the madness is accelerating as the new comes in. Both movements are present now.

In that sense, it's true to say that things are getting worse and better at the same time, which is true. If you look at us here, if you look at how many people are open now to spiritual teaching, things are definitely getting better as far as a new consciousness is concerned. And at the same time, if you look at a lot of the things that you see in the news and what politicians talk about, it's still the old getting worse.

If it's not getting worse, it's at least as bad as before. It's a repetition of the same madness. The old consciousness has not learned a thing.

It can't, because it can only produce an external world based on its own deficiencies. It can't learn anything. Only the new can bring about a new world.

The old consciousness will not learn. It's a repetition of the same stuff again and again and again. The only thing that happens as science and technology increases, the destructive power of the insane old consciousness increases too.

And that's why we arrive at such a critical stage. The magnification of human madness through the means of science and technology. If it weren't for that, human madness would be relatively harmless.

It wouldn't destroy the planet. And even human species would not be, survival would not be at stake. But now with that, it amplifies the madness.

[Speaker 3] (9:00:13 - 9:00:15)

It started with especially the first.